



ISLAMOPHOBIA

- Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights
- Violation of the Rights of Shia Minorities

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

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Introduction

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence is a nongovernmental nonpolitical and nonprofit organization (established in 1988), in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC.

This human rights NGO has set its activities parallel to human rights issues at the international level. One of these issues is Islamophobia and violation of the human rights of Shia minorities, which became one of the focal points of the activities of ODVV over the recent months and during participation in the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council.

Participating in this Session ODVV will be submitting written and oral statements, holding sideline scientific panels on human rights and humanitarian law subjects, presenting new publications, multimedia CDs along with establishing links with UN thematic rapporteurs and international NGOs.

Two sideline panels have been foreseen for the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights, and Violation of the Rights of Shia Minorities, with the utilization of a number of experts from different countries.

The preparation for these panels and the articles took around 4 months and following the review of ODVV team of scientific experts the articles received were selected for presentation in these panels.

This book is a collection of articles of the aforementioned panels which ODVV is holding on the sidelines of the 24th Session of the Council in September 2013.

*Islomophobia and
Violation of Human Rights*

Islamophobia

Facts, Implications and Expected Roles

Dr. Walid Hammoud



Foreword

The relationship between the West and its Muslim citizens couldn't be summed up in the indicators that are inferred in this study. We have been limited in this approach to identify the indicators linked to Islamophobia which reflect the realism that Muslims in the west live in, and suffer from, while other Muslims may enjoy their full rights as effective citizens more than many others in their country of origins, in order to maintain the objectives of this scientific article, that stems from the facts associated to "Islamophobia" as a phenomenon, analyze and criticize it, and come to some effective recommendations to deal with it.

Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the Lebanese University, and the Faculty of Religious Sciences at Saint Joseph University in Beirut.

Introduction

The phenomenon of "Islamophobia", "discrimination against Muslims" or "ethnic, religious,... discrimination" is no longer a temporary experience in the relationship with Muslims, particularly in the west. This phenomenon has turned into tangible fact documented by the daily practices of Muslims in the west, from prohibiting the veil and racial insults, death threatening, to assaults on veiled women, mosques, tomb of Muslims, institutions and individuals, and sometimes the pre-programmed role of media through immediate and organized mobilization process. The aim of which is to establish hostility against Muslims and Islam, as some elites consider that Islam and Muslim practices propose a threat for these communities' security, at present and in the future, or the spirits and values of French Republic, according to other elites. Nowadays, many probably consider that this phenomenon as a battle of concepts where misperceptions regarding historical, cultural, political, and social issues that affect the modern Arab- Islamic civilized formation exist.

The implications and dimensions of this phenomenon have raised a central question about the desired Islamic model in the west: what is required in France, for example, "Islam in France" expresses Muslims' identity which is not considered as conflicting with these communities' values. Or "French Islam" where many view it as throwing off from themselves, their heritage and their cultural background? Or should we adopt the French orientalist, Stefane Acroi, thought who rejects them both and thinks what is required is to have Islam stem primarily from French Muslims and not according to what the French government portrays, because nothing can prevent one from being Muslim and French at the same time?

Researches raise many questions about the implications and ramifications of feeding such a phenomenon inside the western society, in terms of molding the mentality and feelings of the target audience, to promote this culture about Islam as an identity which large fabric and wide component in the demographic structure of the western society belong to; add to it the values and trends that this phenomenon is trying to build against "Muslim citizens" or "immigrants to the west". Another pivotal question raised about the sociological dimensions that could affect

Muslim citizen in every aspect of his/her life, and his/her ability to adapt and integrate with their environment and surroundings.

This approach will read the indicators that mark the existence of the individual and collective impacts of this phenomenon on the Muslims' life, whether they are comers or nationals who contribute to a part of western community fabric, then it will try to reproduce the concept according to its actual indicators in systematic and objective way far from any bias or double standards.

What is the expected role that could be played by Muslims to wipe out a lot of distorted images, false generalization, and misleading perceptions that many have about their heritage, religious and cultural leadership? It is a key question that can be answered here. Add to it the role that could be played by the elite and intellectuals in providing balanced and realistic depiction about the multi-Islam, which interfere "Takfiri and Exclusionary models" and "moderate models" that express Islam which believes in human dignity, the acceptance of dissimilarity, pluralism, and dialogue..?

We will read in this study the indicators associated with Muslims' daily life facts, in the light of its commitment and conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations;¹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;² European Convention on Human Rights;³ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;⁴ and the Durban Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.⁵

Facts, Implications and Global Legislation

"Islamophobia"⁶ has become a worrisome event in the diary relationship with Muslims coming to the West, as we witnessed a rapid shift recently in this concept over the extended, existed, and documented phenomenon. The latter has a lot of implications, dimensions and effects that impact the exacerbated daily reality of many Muslim citizens in the West under⁷ a clear contribution from elites and opinion-makers in fueling such phenomenon.⁸

One of the effects of this phenomenon is the racial insult. During sixties and seventies, "filthy immigrant" was the prevailed "verbal abuse" of racism, and then evolved into "filthy Arab," or "filthy Moroccan". However, today, we have the Islamization of humiliation and the term of the "filthy Muslim" has become widely common, which is another form of Islamophobia.⁹

Over the years, effects of Islamophobia have influenced individuals, groups, institutions, private associations and religious centers. In France, for example, rates of attacks on Muslims increased by 57% in 2012 compared with the previous year, as recorded by CCIF¹⁰ (Collective Against Islamophobia in France). As well as, attacks score reached 469 in 2012 compared to 289 in 2011, while the number of assaults in 2010 was up to 188, with women got 84.4% of the total verbal and physical abuse against individuals in the same country.^{11 12}

Assault rates in the workplace rose from 3.59% in 2010 to 10.77% in 2012, according to the same organization. Insults and attacks have developed to affect Muslims in buses, gyms, health centers, restaurants, and vocational training centers that prevented veiled women from participating in its activities. Moreover, assaults reached mosques, cultural institutions, associations, and restaurants that serve dietary consistent with Islamic laws, "Halal Food".¹³ While in 2013, the rates of Islamophobia rose to 35% in the first months compared to the same period of 2012.¹⁴ Here, we referred to attacks on women wearing simple veil and not the one that was banned in France in 2011. Assault on Muslims, regarding quality and quantity,

represents a remarkable shift and development through more radical forms.¹⁵

According to a study published by Human Rights Watch, edited by Benjamin Ward, Muslims in Europe bore a heavy burden. Concerns about what the so-called "terrorism coming from inside" after Madrid and London bombings, a series of alleged terrorist plots, and the fear of losing the cultural identity, led to increased scrutiny regarding observant Muslims and many Muslim communities in Europe, with the distrust in their loyalty implicitly. As well as, fear of Muslims has had a wider impact on the political debates about "merger of society", a word that expresses a lot of concerns and worries over the status of migrants in society, especially the Arab ones. This fear has led to many calls to move and take action against them.

The concerns about cultural identity inherent in the fear of the status of Muslim immigrants in Europe, as quoted from Chatham House research center. Hijab and Niqab, and to some extent, the Minarets and Mosques, played an important role in these debates because it reminds everyone, visually, that Muslims are living in Europe and they will not leave it.

The fear of the Muslim expanse in Europe did not begin after the al-Qaeda attacks on 9/11 September 2001, the report added. But what has changed is the stigmatization of Bengalis, Pakistanis, Moroccans and Turks immigrants in Europe. While many European officials have sought to clarify the difference between the work of a small group and that of Muslim communities in general, the reactions and arguments about how to confront the terrorist threat emerging from Europe generated the perception that Muslim communities are suspected.

The negative impact of Islamophobia on human rights in Europe is real and factual. On a practical level, integration in the forced community and the concept of integration which does not require any accommodation from the wider community is a failed issue without doubt. When policy makers play on public concerns about the loss of cultural identity and seek for policies that increment, not reduce, Xenophobia, they jeopardize the rights of minorities in Europe. On an aggravate level, they are fixing the concept of "either winner or loser" in guaranteeing the human rights - that is, the minorities have to accept the majority culture (or "Christian values" as suggested by the German Chancellor in 2010), and should

they refuse, their rights would be set aside for the public interest and common well-being.¹⁶

Today, the recent vote in Switzerland over banning the construction of minarets violates observant Muslims' rights to practice their religious beliefs openly and reflects a growing prejudice against Muslims in Western Europe, Human Rights Watch added.

On 29 November, 57% agreed on the ratification of the constitutional amendment to ban the construction of minarets in Switzerland in the future during a national poll held there. The "Yes vote" campaign, led by the Swiss People's Party, was characterized by slogans against Islam and Muslims. Using a poster campaign shows a woman wearing the "Niqab" in front of minarets preparing to launch like a rocket standing on the Swiss flag. And the Swiss government, which opposed the referendum, is required, under Swiss law, to articulate legislation for amending the constitution to be in line with outcomes of the popular vote.

The organization considers that minarets of Muslims reflect the right to express religious beliefs, and its prohibition is a discriminatory one. And the right to express one's religion in public, through worship, teaching, practice and obedience of religious rituals, is an integral

part of the right of religious belief freedom, guaranteed by international human rights charters, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹⁷ and the European Convention on Human Rights,¹⁸ where both documents are ratified by Switzerland. The two charters also forbid discrimination on the basis of religion. This vote is a disturbing manifestation of the cumulative prejudice against Muslims across Europe, according to the Human Rights Watch.¹⁹

This veto is clearly opposing, and even restricting, the individuals' right to worship and practice their religious rituals as has been articulated in the second article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁰ States are allowed to limit the right of practicing religious rites or express them publicly, if only felt the need to do this in order to protect public safety; public order; public health or morals; or the basic rights and freedoms of others, the same organization adds. All of these arguments do not apply to the Swiss ban on minarets, according to Human Rights Watch. By targeting a specific faith among other religions, without any reasonable justification, the ban is considered as discrimination.

Talking about the role of some Media, which has an active role in the Islamophobia casting, one of the

prominent questions can be raised: which image did the media seek to provide about Islam to the audience?

Thomas Deltombe, a writer and journalist, says that the picture which is firmly fixed in the French mind, about Islam and Muslims is not the real one, but it is the image that the media struggled to fix in the minds of the French public.

The September 11 bombings was a watershed event considering how French people are dealing with Islam, and in the media processing of Islam and Muslims' affairs in France, bringing doubt primarily in Muslims, as had occurred when an explosion at a laboratory in Toulouse took place after weeks of New York and Washington bombings. Back then, «Islamists» were considered instantly responsible for that incidence as reported immediately by the French news agency "AFP" before other media and newspapers did the same. However, it turned eventually that it was just groundless rumors, and this was reiterated with Roissy airport event in 2003.²¹

The most important feature that characterize this period is the spreading of «fabricated» studies and reports in the French media, which was provided by the most watched and popular programs on T.V. channels. Between 2003 and 2004, the veil issue returned back into the media

theatre, especially after the demonstrations that opposed the expulsion of veiled girls from schools, and resulted in «more extreme and radical» arguments and debates about Islam and the veil in the media. On October 2003, one of the T.V. programs on the «T F-1» channel showed a scene for Christian students who are wearing their religious uniform in a Catholic school, in Marseille, and another one for a Cross hanging on the wall of another school to confirm that «Secularism exists in France», without wondering why do these secularism deny the right of Muslim women to wear hijab?²²

These daily practices experienced by Muslim citizens in their new homelands are clear indicators of connotations and dimensions to the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in a world depicted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as "a world in which freedom of speech and doctrine free from fear and want", and it is an unblemished prevention for citizens to express their faith and religion openly.²³

These attacks in its various forms hit "the principle of dignity and equality inherent in all human beings," and which was articulated by the Special Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in Durban.²⁴

Individuals and groups would be subjected by the extended violence to compulsion that could disrupt their freedom of belonging to a religion and doctrine.²⁵ The manifestation of their religions through praying on Eid al-Adha or wearing the veil does not contradict with the restrictions set forth by the law which are required by the public safety, order, health and morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.²⁶

The indicators associated with the phenomenon are a clear evidence for the violation of legal and human rights against Islam and Muslim citizens and their religious symbols, which constitute a clear contradiction with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international conventions and relevant international declarations calling for renouncing hatred and racial discrimination, respect cultural diversity, and deny the defamation of religions.

Such hatred that infected millions of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries, and conflicted with the legislations and laws of the countries, whose citizens are of Islamic origins, results in hindering their integration, interaction and participation in public affairs. While Islamophobia constitutes a violation of human rights, it is

considered as a threat to the social cohesion and solidity in the West.

The social extensions of this phenomenon, fueled by the media and elites, to present a violent, aggressive, barbaric and primitive Islam by which terror and the clash among civilizations are in-born feature, "another" that has no values in common with other cultures, and is not affected by, or affects; in addition to be considered as a political ideology to achieve political and military interests away from the individual and collective needs of human societies; Islam with wicked, retarded, and hostile entity would establish belligerence that bypass the elites to reach the national fabric of European society.

These perceptions and generalizations that are published and promoted led, and will lead later, to more broad and dangerous hatred, oppression and discrimination affecting Muslims in the employment, education and housing fields. This conclusion conforms with a report published by the «European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia»²⁷ of the European Union stating that Muslims in Europe suffer from «racial discrimination and panic from Islam, underscoring the outbreak of "persecution in the field of employment, education and housing", which affects Muslims in European countries.

The importance of this report can be viewed through the implications of the outcomes of this phenomenon,²⁸ as they show, for the first time, that racist attitudes are not only the result of commitment to religious rites (praying, fasting and Hajj, where these are practices contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms), but also a result of pre-opinions toward people, whose names like Mohammad, Sufian and Ali.

Islam: Identity and the Multiplicity of Practices

Our concern in this approach is the ideological and social ways by which Muslims around the world express their cultures, feelings and the quality of values they hold, or, as some have viewed their religious leadership against those who are religiously, politically or socially different and their rightful issues, without discussing the motives and their extent of legitimacy. The aim of this paper is to take part in the demonstration of the real image through which Muslims present themselves to the world. These images, in variety and diversity, are supposed to participate in the image formation of Islam and Muslims in the Western public's mind.

The objective approach of Islamophobia cannot be separated from the clear and existed sociological facts manufactured by "Islamic currents," "religious discourse",

and highly complex and composed "fatawas" which become inconsistency due to their complexity and plentiful. One of the consequences of this "religious form and content" is in its ability to produce different shapes and cultures directed toward wide Muslim audience, regarding their relationships inside and outside their countries. These different religious motivations created a variety of factors, which highly influence in the establishment of radical or moderate cultures and practices.

In the first scene, opt to violence featured by prominent tools used by some "Islamic" groups and currents not only inside the Muslim world, but also outside it. These tools are used either to draw the attention to their issues or to bring about a change in the values and standards of a certain society, to which they belong, by force and exclusion down to cancellation.

Some of these groups preferred, in their experience which witnessed a mounting revival today, to make conclusive judgments by condemning individuals and groups that do not form a part of their intellectual identity and radical movement. Then they took hostile or dismissed attitudes toward their societies, institutions, and governments.

Likewise, some of these groups, in their real experience, resort to issue an individual judgment to condemn that community with conversion and blasphemy. To make a remarkable shift, after that, in this attitude to become more aggressive, as extremist believes that the destruction of society and its institutions is a kind of drawing closer to God and Jihad; due to this ignorant and awry society which does not follow God's judgement, according to the extremist.

Today we cannot take no notice of the most striking features of Arab "revolutions" where politician, human rights activists and Islamist are overlapped with each other, so that the religious extremism symbolizes the most prominent feature and the most recurring in the daily life facts of Iraqi and Syrian civilians, who belong to minorities or different religions or beliefs.

In Iraq, for example, religious groups identified Jihad direction: a minority of Christians who do not get wide tribal relations or armed militias that protect and secure them as their Iraqi Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds counterparts. These groups' objective is: to evacuate Iraq of non-Muslim elements.

In 2003, the situation of Christians in Iraq deteriorated dramatically, since nearly half of Iraqi Christians,

estimated by 800 thousand people, have fled abroad because of the violence- the mass murder of men, women, the elderly and children is in the forefront. Some of them exposed to criminal acts such as kidnapping, torturing and murdering; and in particular, incidents of abduction and assassination of Christian clergymen were reiterated, as happened in 2005 with Bolos Iskandar. Bolos, one of the Syriac Orthodox Church bishops, was caught by an armed group in one of Mosul streets. The kidnappers demanded a ransom, which paid for them by his family, but after a period of time, his body was found in one of the streets beheaded with no limbs.

In December 2006, Sami Rais, the priest at the Chaldean Church, was kidnapped in Baghdad and then released. However, days after this incident, the killing of Protestant bishop Munther Aldeir, 69 years old, was announced. On June 3, 2007, another Chaldean priest, Raghid Kni, shot to death by unknown assailants with three of the deacons after they came out of the church in the city of Mosul.

On another occasion, Dr. Sheikh Saad Durihim faced severe criticism on the social networking site, "Twitter", after he made a tweet about the Iraqi situation and saw that the fighters (mujahideen) have to be ruthless and murder

those detainees, even though it is a child or a woman, so that Shiite faction fears from them.

According to Durihim tweet, "If the Mujahideen in Iraq practice brutality and murder, even with those who are captivated, regardless of its gender or age, a child or a woman, al-Rafida (shiite) will fear from them, but idealism made them exceed their limits . If we act just like the enemy acts, he will reevaluate his calculations, and will be deterred from his criminality, which is a requirement; but if he thought that he kills your children and women without accountability, this will make him greedy."²⁹

For the meantime, the tragic situation of the relationship of the Christian minority with the "Islamic groups" in Syria is facing an unprecedented oppression and a great fear of Islamist takeover.³⁰ Christianity is a crime with respect to these currents that judge those who belongs to this religion with death.³¹ Christians expressed clearly that they touch an extremist Islamic dimension among combatants cause them to worry about the future.

In Egypt, fatwas calling for killing of Coptic "Christians" increased dramatically due to the Coptic Church's practices of Christianization among Muslims, according to their opinion.³² Shedding of Copts blood

becomes an optimal way to get closer from God, while "Al-Azhar" rejects this kind of fatwas, which does not reflect the vision of Islam. These opinions and fatwas turned into a source of genuine anxiety and concern for the other partner at home.³³

The fatwa, which is revealed by the professor of rhetoric at the University of Al-Azhar, Dr. Mahmoud Shaaban, on the religious channel "al-Hafez", about shedding the opposed FIS leaders' blood, triggered widespread reactions, in coincidence with the assassination of a prominent leftist in Tunisia.³⁴

Today, the scene of sectarian killings in Syria has become a part of the daily battles and conflicts, so that the legitimacy of killing the other of different religion formed the last episode of bloody conflicts which claim the lives of civilians, from both the majority and minority, of women, children and elders. "Political - religious" discourse is no longer works secretly, ensuring in his terms and connotations that killing the other is in response to Jihad for the sake of God.³⁵

In France, "Mohamad Merah" incident,³⁶ the executer of Toulouse attack, became a part and parcel of some "Islamists'" behavior with the communities or groups aiming at drawing attention to their issues and agony.

Killing children turned out to be a part of these Islamic movements' legitimate behavior that consider this young as a knight and one of the martyrs of Islam.³⁷

In the other scene, moderate and tolerant religious discourse was expressed by religious leaders at one of the oldest Islamic institutions in the world, Al-Azhar. Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb, shiekh at al-Azhar, expressed his refusal to takfir the Shia sect (convict it with blasphemy), and his readiness for conducting dialogue with the Catholic Church seeking the world peace. We as Muslims are keen on the survival of Christians in the Levant because their survival and prosperity represent the substantial civilization of the Levant spiritually, morally, and culturally, he added. It is also an indication that Islam is a religion of tolerance, coexistence and acceptance of others, stressing that freedom of worship is guaranteed and the freedom of conscience is prescribed by Islam, Al-Tayeb said.³⁸ In the same context, Al-Azhar proxy, Sheikh Mahmoud Ashour, indicates that the rapprochement between Sunnis and Shiites couldn't happen on the basis of making some concessions of one party's beliefs and convictions to the other, but on the basis of mutual respect and conducting dialogue over cases of disagreement, and activating cooperation.

One of the main challenges that the Iranian regime had faced after the Islamic revolution, was its ability to reconcile the ethnic and sectarian demographic composition of Islamic Republic, which is overwhelming by the Shiite sect. As well as its capability to deal with the various sects and ethnic entities by keeping national solidarity and unity away from intolerance, fanaticism, disintegration and marginalization for all components of the Iranian people, irrespective of their religious and ethnic affiliations.

In the tangible reality, but contradicting to many distorted perceptions which some media has tried to promote, and in the recent experience for the Islamic Republic of Iran model (Islamic state) where minority exercised religious cults, freedom of the judiciary in the personal status, freedom of teaching religious landmarks of different sects in public schools, and the establishment of private religious schools.

Iranian experience has seen, in the light of the Islamic State (as a model), a remarkable development in the manner of dealing with Christians, it widened freedoms' margin for minorities in general, and worked on the involvement of different groups in the democratic process in particular.

Four religious minorities - Jewish, Christian (Armenians and Assyrians), and Zoroastrianism³⁹ in the Islamic Republic of Iran are government-sponsored at the present time. These minorities enjoy, in the context of Islamic laws, cultural, social and political freedoms.

Nine articles of the Iranian constitution proclaimed the rights of the followers of different divine religions, and upon Article 67 of this constitution, the deputies of religious minorities make their constitutional oath, with mention of their own heavenly book. In addition, the Article 19 of the current constitution stresses that members of the Iranian people from any nation or tribe have equal rights; and that the color, race, language, and other similar things are not considered a reason for differentiation. Besides, this minorities have their own places for worship, and schools, exhibitions, trade unions, charities, books and publications (newspapers and magazines), and publishers to distribute religious books. Furthermore, the Iranian constitution allocates five seats for minorities, three for Assyrian and Armenian minority, which belongs to the Christian religion, and two for Jews and Alzerdasht.^{40 41}

Regarding the personal status laws for Christians in Iran, Iranians Christians marry in church, but they register

their marriage in the state departments of Iran. However, Christian church has to decide actually in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance, in its different sects and denominations.

We are facing various forms of values and practices by which Muslims reflect themselves; and in their relations with minorities or sects and religions that coexist with; or in their relations with the West. By other words, we're referring to the "Islamic interpretations", or "Islamic models" of clerics, religious states, or religious currents, without diverting the reading toward the identity of "Islam" that requires reading, analyzing, and criticizing of religious heritage with different tools and methodologies.

Therefore, we are in front of Islam as a religious heritage: religious forms and practices that exercise murder, exclusion and cancelation supported by religious speech which legislate its practices by posing them on the religious identity; forms of moderate and tolerant which believe in difference and pluralism and use religious discourse to legitimize values of acceptance and respect for difference...

The process of promoting Islamophobia adopted a single form and model, "Islam and Takfiri, aggressive, criminal, terrorist, and primitive Muslims", with terror and the clash of civilizations are innate features. "Another" Islam which

has no values in common with other cultures, is neither affected by, nor affects it, in addition to be considered as a political ideology in order to achieve political and military interests away from the individual and collective needs and requirements of human communities.

The discourse, which is embedded by this media, is biased against Islam away from the systematic and objective forms that oblige researchers to consider it a "religion" as any other one with its scientific and objective approach requiring analysis of the different layouts and phenomena interacting with it as far as working on implanting a typical frame that depicts Islam and Muslims as a threat dedicated to the values of civilized modern societies.

The fourth authority, as a media capable of public-making and formulating its mentality with the western citizen culture, could direct and motivate many extremist and non-justifiable practices toward Muslim citizen. This could be happened through stressing on a "standardized form of Islam", in the light of media's ability to generalize this image for the western- public, turns the Islamic individual and group terrorism to a part of axioms and postulates in the thinking of "citizen vs. citizen", with what could be a counter hostile as a consequence for these

hostile behavior, threatening entity, cohesion and values of these communities.

Some individuals and groups managed to maim and deform the authentic concepts of the forms and practices expressed by Muslims. What Islamic movement is witnessing today with respect to its legislation, practices, and religious fatwas and speeches but reflects people, groups or nations own interpretations of Islam, not Islam itself. The referral of extremism, murder and violence toward Islam-the identity is remote from objectivity and scientific research methodology which is required to recognize that Islam, in its heritage, represented by the two sources of Islamic legislation "Quran and Sunnah", is something, and multiple forms of the practices of Muslims today are something else.

In brief, the ignoring of the distinction between Islam as a religion, and the multiple forms of practices expressed by Muslims could be easily seen, so that the ready prejudice turned into axioms in the minds of many, such as the easy connection between Islam and violence, Islam and terrorism, and Islam as a natural enemy of secularism, democracy and modernity with being a religion that opposes the freedom of expression, all these preconceptions have been able to generate fear in the

heart of the European Communities that do not know Islam well and perceived it as a coherent, unified, closed and deaf block.

At the same time, we cannot be but objective to conclude that there are a lot of realistic and objective reasons for the development and formation of Islamophobia state, "fear from Islam", in Western society's mind and thoughts. This due to obvious and de facto Islamic acts that adopt murder, cancellation and takfir, as an optimal legislated way in the relationship with the other and also becomes a part of the religious discourse ... On the other hand, there are different forms of religious practices and visions for various open minded, tolerant and moderate groups and currents. Both models may, or may not, reflect Islam the "identity and heritage."

The objective of the west, originating from its values and human rights legislation, necessitates the separation of diverse shapes and forms, and perhaps inconsistent with Islam, as opposed to the responsibility of Muslim elites and audience which must confess the responsibility of Islamist models for the industry and justification of many cases of Islamophobia, and reviewing the argument theory of "West conspiracy on the Islamic entity."

What role can be played by social actors in the West and beyond?

by invoking the facts related to Islamophobia: two scenes are drawn related to Muslims' relationship with the West:

The first scene, is the most prevailed image of Islam in the Western media: Islam that promotes violence, in light of Muslims' stigmatization with terrorism, racism and backwardness. This scene is based on:

- A realistic but not artificial picture for the performance of Islamists, who are characterized by violence, extremism and demagoguery, as well as engaged in murder and infidelity "takfir" as a way to deal with the unlike.

- The pre- programmed role of media, elites and authors in order to provide a distorted and hybrid image for radical and barbaric Islam, which is unable to adapt to the pluralistic societies.

In the second scene, the reality of Muslims in the West suffers from a clear distinction up to the extremism in all aspects of life. These experienced and expanded events shifted to a dangerous phenomenon threatening the security, stability and the lives of Muslim citizens in the West; and became an unmistakable danger to the cohesion and security of the society as a whole, with many Muslims feel that they are threatened, discriminated and targeted.

Today, this phenomenon constitutes a clear violation of international, global, European and American legislations and declarations that are adopted by countries characterized, for extended decades, with the development of domestic legislation that preserves the rights of its citizens, regardless of their affiliations and their religious or ethnic origin and ethnicity.

These events have turned into tangible phenomenon, forming a part of the western's culture and look toward Islam and Muslims, as is the case of the "image of Muslims in the public minds inside the British society, where 58% of the respondents associated Islam with the term "hardliner"; half of the sample coupled Islam with terrorism; and two-thirds believed that Islam suppresses women's freedom." [i] In contrary to previous surveys which confirmed that the Muslim minority in Britain is the most loyal and trustworthiness to the state.

In light of this danger which threatens the fabric of these communities and their coexistence, integration and security, the need arises for urgent intervention to address this phenomenon, which some was able to convert it into an everyday reality. This fact forms a coup against its values and principles.

The handling process requires two roles:

First, it is materialized by the responsibility of the Western media, the institutions concerned with the guidance and upbringing of the public, and the elites, politicians and academics. Second, it is the responsibility of the Muslims themselves involving individuals, groups and Islamic institutions within and outside the Western society.

Western society, with its media, elites and its current decision-makers, should present Islam, to his audience and to the world, in an objective manner by its diversity, richness and complexity, in its radical and moderate forms, and religious heritage away from the intentional or unintentional distortion and deformation. This due to the fact that the forms and models of "Islam" which are reflected by many cannot be summed up by a single entity or image, as we cannot be decisive and deemed that this or that practice is an honest and realistic reflection of Islam, the identity and heritage.

One of the major tasks that could be carried out by the Western media today is to adopt the diversity in presenting forms and cults of Muslims and defining the realistic Islamic heritage associated with pluralism and difference. In this regard, Vincent Geisser sees that the French media,

for example, choose a variety of Maghreb and Algerian names living in France to perpetuate the negative image of Islam and Muslims with the disinformation about names like Mohammed Arkoun.

This responsibility associated with states, its institutions and elites is not an intellectual luxury or additional value, but it is in the core of the urgent needs of all its citizens, especially Muslims. The true manifestation of committing this responsibility requires developing plans and strategies for urgent intervention to preserve the rights of its citizens. This aims at ensuring its ability to abolish a lot of perceptions and prejudices for incomplete and distorted explanations in many cases, which do not necessarily reflect those of Islam as a religion, and the assorted performance of Muslims in the context of a religious perspective and the social practices.

Add to emphasize the importance of Western society role, Muslims need today to build the destroyed bridges, and prescribe a long-term strategy in order to change the bad image of Islam and Muslims that imprinted in the Western mind, within the framework of facing the phenomenon of fear of Muslims or "Islamophobia", which has become a threat to the security and integration of Muslims inside the Western society.

The establishment of an active and influential role of Muslims needs to:

A. Understanding the reality of Western society:

Islam, to which many people in these communities belong, did not draw the western people attention, until the September 11 attacks which made a dramatic shift in shedding light upon "bloody and barbaric Islam" in many of the mass media and the arguments of some elites, in order to form the mentality and mind of this public toward Islam and Muslims who pose a serious threat to the West.

The process of intervention and treatment needs to adopt scientific methodologies to collect data on the perceptions and prejudices that drive the Western public and elites and the media's role in dealing with the issues of Islam and Muslims, then use near and long-term intervention strategies, as well as analysis of the role of active Islamic organizations in improving the image of Muslims. The collection of precise data on the reality of the phenomenon, its direct and indirect effects and incubator environment enables the process of programmed and effective intervention.

The religious discourse adopted by many in the establishment of a single approach focuses on the

oppression of Muslims in Western society or the entire world, and the insistence of some individuals and groups to radicalize and murder as an optimal way to influence the governments of these countries, away from dialogue and communication, and provide a realistic picture of moderate and tolerant Islam which believes in coexistence and acceptance of difference, would increase the development of a more distortion of Islam God intended it to be but mercy to the worlds through his prophet Mohammad. The intervention, which could contribute to address the phenomenon in the West, inevitably needs to understand the reality of this West in all its complexity.

Understand the West increasingly is required from Muslim, as West cannot be summed up in its involvement in the Crusades, colonialism and neo-colonialism; it has a lot of common values with the Muslim as well as differences. A well understanding of the West will result in better continuity with the Western world.

In the same context, Dr. Bassem Khafagi, head of Research and Studies of Arab Center for humanity Studies, believes that overcoming the current crisis requires many of the studies that aim to identify the interior reality of the West, and try to understand it truly before determining the mechanisms and means of dealing

with it intellectually, culturally and missionary, pointing out that studying and understanding the reality of the West is not an intellectual luxury, but an urgent necessity increasingly needed, day after day.

Dr. Khafaji Suggests that the importance of knowing the reality of peoples from within and from the social and economic aspects does not negate realizing the role played by the ruling political elites. In the case of the United States, there are various administrations, whether Republican or Democratic in the field of domestic policy subject to the influence of lobbyists and interest groups, and legislate what benefit of the minority of business leaders who represent the giants corporations, which would be badly detrimental to (inflict a serious damage) to the interests of broad masses. Therefore, the understanding of U.S. reality is the initial steps to eliminate the fear of Islam, it is necessary to know the powers that influence in political decision-making related to our Arab and Islamic nation, their ideas and cultural range, and their impact on our society and identity. Without such a thorough understanding of the western reality, we couldn't be good at dealing with it and wouldn't improve the understanding of the causes of its advancement or falling back.

B. Relinquishing Negativity and Isolation Rejecting:

Events that are practiced by mainstream Muslims have a share in changing the daily life facts for Muslim and non-Muslim citizens, as the American did not know before that his neighbor is a Muslim, or perhaps his friend doctor is a Muslim. At a time, "Islam", for the western community, wasn't an interest or objection or doubt, and things were going smoothly and very quietly. Many of the Muslims live freely and enjoy all the rights in countries that recognize the rights of all citizens of different religions and faiths.

But what would be the situation after September 11 attack, and Mohammad Merah? And forms of religious extremism in the Middle East and Africa?

Muslims have to shift from the circle of limiting themselves to defend Islam, and their opt of isolation and foreignness from their communities, toward promoting successful Muslim models in these communities, and activate their presence and participation in the flexibility of democratic civil society, and present the image of moderate and openness Islam.

C. The role of Islamic institutions and elites:

The role of Muslims elites is getting rid of ambiguity, misunderstanding and confusion between the concept of

terrorism and Islam, in order to erase the negative image of Islam. This course of action begins (proceed) by preparing aware and educated modernist clerics, who have the ability to provide pictures and scenes of moderate Islam able to penetrate the borders of language and geography, and which has capabilities of communication and dialogue on shared values and discussion of fears and concerns of Western people.

The affluent Islamic heritage is not accessible to Western intellectual audience and elites. From here, there is a need to translate Islamic books and heritage to foreign languages, especially those that are based on the concepts and values of dealing with religious differences. This diverse heritage is a part of the extended identity that couldn't be summarized in distorted and hybrid perceptions which have been circulated by false ways far from reality.

The direct dialogue with the public and elites in these communities about Islam and Muslims, about their doubts, fears and perceptions, would remove a lot of scenes of confusion and the ready evaluations, which turned out to be intuitive (self-evidence) in the Western mind about Islam and Muslims.

An important role could be played by Muslims through their engagement and support for existing institutions and

organizations that promote their issues and support their causes and image.

What Islamic religious and academic institutions need is re-training and re-educating elites of preachers and imams of mosques inside and outside Europe and enhance their capacity to educate moderate public does not opt for extremism and radicalism in claim its rights within these communities. Perhaps these institutions must be assured to the extent to which the values and attitudes of these imams in relation to their faith are inconsistent with dialogue and coexistence issues, and their vision of the importance of the difference and how to deal with it. It is important to reassure the institutions that supervise them to their religious identity, and that they do not believe in extremism, takfir, and cancellation as an approach to achieve their goals.

D. Re-examining multiple formats and interpretations of Islam:

Islamic currents and religious thoughts that interpret religion as an identity and practice have the responsibility to re-read itself in an objective and critic manner, so that the beliefs, ideas and perceptions associated with managing diversity and differences in the light of Islam

intentions, and the ability of these models to adapt, integrate and deal with pluralism represent an essential criterion of re-criticism and re-evaluation. The renewal of religious thought under multiple, and sometimes contradicted, models in addition to recognizing that these diverse interpretations are products of the "non-sacred" human mind need to be examined and read permanently.

Many questions need to be re-examined, especially in terms of compatibility of these new interpretations of Islam with Islam, which has spread in the tribal fanatic environment that practices murder and cancellation of vulnerable minorities and the poor who do not belong to any tribe to protect them, to dedicate in its beginning values of brotherhood, justice, equality and respect for others' rights to life and dignity?

Do today's interpretations deviate from the purposes of Islam for political reasons and personal interests? Are killing and abolishing those of different ideology and faith consistent with the philosophy of Islam related to its relation with the others? Are these interpretations and murder and behead fatawa compatible with the experience of the prophet of Islam with the Christians and the Jews of Medina the first capital of the Islamic state? How can we reconcile these practices and Declaration of prophet

Mohammed in al-Medina that those who are of different religious in this country of minorities constitute a single nation with Muslims? Is this logic compatible with the texts of Qoran, the primary source of Islamic legislation, which emphasizes dialogue, communication, compassion and mercy?

These "Islamists" as individuals, elites, currents and countries need to re-evaluate their perspective and the religious background on which they based their rhetoric, determined their legislation and produce their fatawa, in order to be more honest and objective in linking their vision and practices within their own countries and beyond, with Islam, which they belong to or "express".

E. Promotion of culture of awareness and criticism for mass media:

One of the most effective and influential factors in the dissemination of false images about Islam and Muslims is the media, which has worked to create and produce these images. Muslims are required to maintain an approach according the relevant issues with the media, in addition to the ceaseless criticism for its role, objectivity and professional as an urgent role of Muslims and other components of Western society.

F. Enhancement of communication and lasting dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims:

Western citizen needs Muslims and non-Muslims to believe in the importance and necessity of co-existence. This coexistence is based upon commitment to the values of dialogue, positive communication, and the openness on the difference between the various components of society, irrespective of their origins, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The Muslim or Western classification as an enemy would increase the rift and differences and aggravate the integration and interaction between the citizens of the same country. Building bridges of understanding through the activation of programs, meetings, seminars, and outreach conferences, which address, discuss and approach the crises associated with the phenomenon in all its complexity, through discussion, scientific and objective interaction, down to the partnership in the proposed intervention mechanisms are required from all parties.

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3. European Convention on Human Rights. A convention to secure human rights in the scope of Europe council, article 9, Roma, 4 November, 1950.
4. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, article 10, December 2000.
5. The Durban Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, article 1, "no one should expose to any compulsory act affects his freedom of choice of a religion or faith", Durban, South Africa, 31 august- 7 September, 2001.
6. This word is derived linguistically from the Greek word phobos, which means unconscious and unjustified fear. Given this, we can say that Islamophobia is an unconscious and unjustified fear, and random rejection of Islam. Mohammad Fadel Redwan, The Concept Concern and Controversial Visions, p.1.

7. Claude Imbert, magazine *Le Point*, Oct. 24, 2003, "To be honest, I'm a little Islamophobic. It does not bother me to say (...) I have the right, I'm not alone in this country who thinks that Islam - Islam I mean, I do not even talk about Islamists - as a religion brings debility of various archaisms, provides a way of looking at the woman, regularly downgrading the woman."

8. Michel Houellebecq; *Lire.2001* magazine. The most con religion is Islam. When you read the Koran, you become collapsed, collapsed! The Bible, at least, is very beautiful because Jews have a sacred literary talent".

9. Vincent Geisser, *New Islamophobia*, Discovery Publishing, 2003.

10. *Collective Against Islamophobia in France*.

11. Nantes.9-12 forced and violent Unveiling of a woman wearing a veil with her children by a stranger at the carnival of Nante.

12. Marseille 8-10, a 17-year young girl was hospitalized after being beaten with sticks by a man in the street under the pretext of wearing the Hijab.

In Villiers-sur-Marne 4-12, a schoolgirl forbidden access to courses at the playground, any contact with other college students, on the grounds that wearing a skirt and a headband is a religious attire.

13. August 4, a man and his companion fired repeatedly at a group of young people celebrating the breaking of the Ramadan fast, and on a car in which there were a woman and her 9 year old daughter Aigues –Mortes.

14. Abdallah Zekri, President of the Observatory against Islamophobia *LEXPRESS.fr*, published on 24 July, 2013, Islamophobic actions and threats have increased from 35% in France in the first half of 2013, compared to the same period in 2012, there are 108 action of Islamophobic: violence, assault, torture, vandalism, which were officially registered between 1 January and 30 June 2013, compared to 80 incidents during the same period in 2012. An increase of 41.2%.

15. Abdallah Zekri, President of the Observatory against Islamophobia; L'EXPRESS.fr, published on 24 July, 2013, Islamophobic actions and threats have increased from 35% in France in the first half "This is not a new phenomenon as, worrying occurred during July, including attacks against women openly, wearing not the niqab, which is prohibited since April 2011, but the simple scarf."

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27. European monitoring Center on racism and Xenophobia report, Dec. 2006.

28. European monitoring Center on racism and Xenophobia report, Dec. 2006.

29. Riyad, Alweam, Mohammad Alharbi, 24 April, 2013.

30. Ghazeer site. July 27, 2013. In a letter from "deacon Emanuel Youkhana of the Assyrian Levant Church" addressed to the "National Review" site, he said: "We are observing another Arab country that are losing the minority Assyrian Christian. When this happened in Iraq, nobody believed that Syria will suffer the same. Assyrian Christians are fleeing due to widely threats of kidnap, rape and murder. There are daily reports on the ethnic and religious cleansing that happens there, and soon Syria will be evacuated from Christians."

31. Ghazeer site, a woman, from al-Hasakah, tells how her husband and son shot in the head by the Islamists, and the only fault they commit, their Christianity: "The only

crime committed by my husband and my son is the Christianity ... is that they belong to Christianity."

32. Salafi leader, Ahmed Mahmoud Abdullah, known as Abi Islam, threatened to eliminate Christians within two days because of the Church's practices of Christianization among Muslims. He said in his program on his channel "al-Omma": "We didn't start attacking them, but they who has been practicing Christianization among Muslims since five years ago." He continued: "I spoke with them a lot, and warned of sedition, and I said that for Rifat Fikri, an Egyptian priest, and I added: if you are five million, you will be able to evangelize only other five million, but we are 80 million and we can get rid of you within two days"

Abu Islam warned the Copts from commencing problems, and said: "Shame on you, do not ignite problems, Christians began the Alkhosous events then they shed tears; they started the cathedral events and cried," accusing church leaders of igniting sedition for the future. He added that he had recordings of some of them while they are urging young people to commit violence, claiming they are afraid not being able to build churches after fifty years.

33. Coptic journalist, Hanan Abdel-Malak, pointed out that she no longer feels safe in Egypt, no longer goes out to work only in the most critical circumstances, and fears her children safety while going to school.

34. Shaaban Speaking at the channel, "al-Hafez" with the presenter of the program, Dr. Atef Abdul Rashid, said that everyone compete Mursi on the presidential post, and anyone who wants to drop Mursi, and anyone who wants to take him out of his chair, and anyone who clearly ask to replace Mursi , apply to the prophet saying, peace be upon him: "If someone swore allegiance to Imam, by giving him his hand and his heart, he should obey Him if he can; and if anyone wanted to dispute him, you should kill the

other... you push him (who wants to replace Mursi) by any way. But if he doesn't deter unless by killing him, you should do so."

35. ar.pukcc.org/index.php/الراوية-الصحافة/item/14773- مؤشرات-قوية-على-تعميق-الصراع-الطائفي -
 إسلاميون-متشددون-سنة-يحتفلون-بقتل-٦٠-شيعة-في-دير-الزور-ويحرق-منازلهم-وكالات-ومصادر-متعدد

According to reports from the province of Deir al-Zour in eastern Syria, about 60 militants of Shiites loyal to the Assad regime were killed, after an extensive attack launched by fighters from the Syrian opposition (from hardliner sunni Islamists) on the village of Htalh, in the countryside of Deir al-Zour, which is predominantly by Sunni and Shiite is the minority there. Syrian regime in the last few weeks armed them, according to Rami Abdel Rahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, who said that the opposition fighters controlled Htalh, and there is a general displacement movement in the town, after burning Shiite's houses by fighters.

The same Syrian Observatory showed on his channel on YouTube videos celebration of the Islamist fighters killed 60 Shiite militants, most of them are militants. In one of the sections presented by the Observatory, says the photographer: "Brigade Aalsadek al-Amin prepares to break into the homes of Shiites loyal to the Assad regime in the village of Htalh," then about 12 armed men appears in the courtyard of a house, around the body of at least one, covered with yellow color, one of the gunmen revealed the face of a young man suffering a gunshot wound in the head."

A bearded gunman, dressed in black, has wrapped his head with a gang written on it "No God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet," calling Sunnis by saying: "we will meet in the doom's day, fight for your religion."

In a second clip, ten gunmen were raising machine guns in the air, while the cameraman announced, "raise the flag of No God but God above Shiites houses (Shiites al-Rafida), by the hands of brave and courage heroes Mujahideen of Deir ez-Zor." And on the impact of

saying, there is no god but allah, and shooting in the air, he continued: "Here our Mujahideen are celebrating the entering of Shiites' homes, God is great all the houses of converters were burned," and appears in the background of the scene burning houses.

36. huffingtonpost.fr/2012/07/17/mohamed-merah-enregistrements-entretiens-conversations_n_1678436.html) Mohamed Merah had killed three children and a teacher at the entrance and in the courtyard of the Jewish religious school Otzar Hatorah, Toulouse.

37. francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/affaire/merah/fou-ou-soldat-de-dieu-le-cas-merah-divise-les-specialistes_75823.html. Organization "Jund al-Khilafah" (Soldiers of the Caliphate), linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed the responsibility for the Jewish Secondary School Ozar Hatorah incident. In this text, the killer, dubbed "Knight of Islam," is called "the French Youssef."

38. Al-nahar Lebanese newspaper, Ahmad Albihiri and Aouda Rashwan, 15 october, 2010.

39. Sarkis Abu- Zeid, Christians in Iran: Facts, Immigration, and Future, Wednesday, 18 April, 2012.

40. Sarkis Abu- Zeid, Christians in Iran: Facts, Immigration, and Future, Wednesday, 18 April, 2012.

41. The Iranian constitution, article 64, proclaimed that: "Assyrians and Chaldeans one deputy in the majlis, and two for the Armenian both in the south and the north, and when any Christian minority has increased in number, additional deputy will be given to it in the majlis every decade for 150 thousand people."

Religiophobia

Fear of Religion, Fear of the Religious

Dr. Issa Diab



In Religious studies, *Religion* is defined as “an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to the supernatural, and to spirituality.”¹ There is a debate among scholars whether religion is a “cultural system” or “anthropological category”.² The political economist and sociologist Max

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion>. Retrieved August, 8, 2013.

2. While religion is difficult to define, one standard model of religion, used in religious studies courses, was proposed by Clifford Geertz, who simply called it a "cultural system" (Clifford Geertz, *Religion as a Cultural System*, 1973). A critique of Geertz's model by Talal Asad categorized religion as "an anthropological category." (Talal Asad, *The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category*, 1982.)

Weber showed, in his book “*the Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*”¹, the effect of religion on the country’s economy and policy making. Whatever, needless to say that religion affects the religious human being’s behaviour and society. In monotheistic religions, the supernatural is the world of God (Elohim/Yahweh and Allah). God is the perfection of goodness, strength and knowledge. Thus, religion is the means that relates the human being into the world of perfection, in terms of goodness, power, and knowledge, in order to transform the religious human being’s character into harmony with the perfect God.

Religiophobia is a composite term formed by merging the two words *Religion* and *phobia*. *Religiophobia*, on syntactic level, means: “the phobia that comes from religion and affects the practitioner or the people around him”, or “religious practices that restrict others’ freedom and abuse human rights.

In use, a new element was added to the syntactic meaning of *Religiophobia*; this is a negative reaction to

1. Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Germany 1905; the book was published in English: Max Weber, Peter R. Baehr, Gordon C. Wells, *The Protestant ethic and the "spirit" of capitalism and other writings*. Penguin 2002. ISBN 978-0-14-043921-2.

this fear towards religion in general that discriminates the religious people. We have now three behavioural elements in this issue: Religion, Phobia, and discrimination.

What I mean by *Religiophobia* is the fear of religion shown by atheist seculars, and this latter group's opposition to all aspects of religion in society and their exercise of discrimination towards religious people because of this fear. This applies to the three intended groups in this paper, i.e., seculars, Christians and Muslims.

Being born in a Christian family, I used to keep a high esteem for my religion, and had a high respect for both religious people and religion ministers (clergies and nuns). Things changed in me progressively as much as I went deep in studying "History of Religion" and "Religious Sciences". In these two disciplines, I got to know how peoples, during history, got acquainted with their gods; how religions were formed in terms of socio-historical phenomenon, how religion was institutionalized, and how religious institutions functioned, not independently from politics and personal agendas of their charismatic leaders. Yes, political exploitation of religion across ages is a reality. Charismatic religious leaders tailored religious thought and institutionalized it in the form of religious

sects to serve their own political, materialistic or authority benefits. All this made me beware of strange religious ideas, mainly those that restrict the freedom of individuals, abuse human rights, and abuse the humanistic value in human beings.

My experience in “religion” is the experience of a big number of intellectuals who are closely observing the development of religious phenomenon, its influence of social life, and its bad use by politicians. Seeing the bad consequences of religion in the society, those intellectuals have expressed reserves about the religious issue in general and warned people against some dangers existing in certain forms of religious practices. In many cases, those intellectuals adopted, in their speech, a way of generalization, and expressed their resentment of religion in general, and all religious practices become vulnerable to criticism by the community, and religious people became subjects to mockery and irony.

My aim, in this lecture/article, is to show how *Religiophobia* emerged: when, where, and how the reaction against religion became an abuse of human rights, and how can we help to preserve the noble aim of religion, its respect, and to individuals their religious rights.

I. The circumstances that led to the emergence of Religiophobia

Although a large number of Medieval and contemporary thinkers warned of certain types of religiosity, especially in Christianity, *religiophobia* did not become a subject of concern to theologians and sociologists, and acquired an idiomatic name as it happened in the aftermath of the emergence of radical Islam in the twentieth century and the emergence of the term *Islamophobia*.

The description of religion as “*the opium of peoples*” is attributed to Karl Marx (1818-1848), but no secular associations were then formed to resist religion as today. The emergence and circulation of the use of *Islamophobia* led to the use of technical terms such as *Christianophobia* and *Religiophobia*.

I anticipate saying that almost every religious group exercised a kind of religiophobia towards the other different groups when it was in power or in a position to do so. The exercise of religiophobia is not then limited to secular groups.

1. The Emergence of Islamophobia

One early use cited as the term's first use is by the painter Alphonse Étienne Dinet and Algerian intellectual

Sliman ben Ibrahim in their 1918 biography of Islam's prophet Muhammad.¹ Writing in French, they used the term *islamophobie*. Robin Richardson writes that in the English version of the book, the word was not translated as "*Islamophobia*", but rather as "feelings inimical to Islam"². Dahou Ezzehouni has cited several other uses in French as early as 1910, and from 1912 to 1918.³

According to Christopher Allen, these early uses of the term did not have the same meaning as in contemporary usage, as they described a fear of Islam by liberal Muslims and Muslim feminists, rather than a fear or dislike/hatred of Muslims by non-Muslims.⁴ On the other hand, Fernando Bravo Lopez argues that Dinet and ibn Sliman's use of the term was as a criticism of overly hostile

1. Dinet, Alphonse Étienne et ben Ibrahim, Sliman, *La Vie de Mohammed, Prophète d'Allah*, Paris, 1918; reprinted and published by G.-P. Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, 1975- Cited from Otterbeck, Jonas; Bevelander, Pieter (2006). *Islamofobi — en studie av begreppet, ungdomars attityder och unga muslimars utsatthet* (PDF) (in Swedish). Anders Lange. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia. ISBN 91-976073-6-3. Retrieved 23 November 2011; Allen, Christopher (2010). *Islamophobia*. Ashgate Publishing. pp. 5–6.

2. Richardson, Robin (December 2009). "Islamophobia or anti-muslim racism – or what?" PDF : <http://www.insted.co.uk/anti-muslim-racism.pdf> , Retrieved July 25, 2013.

3. Ezzehouni, Dahou. "L'islamophobie, un racisme apparu avec les colonisations" in <http://www.algerie-focus.com/blog/2010/02/lislamophobie-un-racisme-apparu-avec-les-colonisations/> Retrieved July 25, 2013.

4. Allen, Christopher (2010). *Islamophobia*. Ashgate Publishing. pp. 5–6; Chris Allen (2007). "Islamophobia and its Consequences". *European Islam* (Centre for European Policy Studies): 144 to 167.

attitudes to Islam by a Belgian orientalist, Henri Lammens, whose project they saw as a “pseudo-scientific crusade in the hope of bringing Islam down once and for all.” Fernando Bravo Lopez also notes that an early definition of Islamophobia appears in the Ph.D. thesis of Alain Quellien, a French colonial bureaucrat:

“For some, the Muslim is the natural and irreconcilable enemy of the Christian and the European; Islam is the negation of civilization; and barbarism, bad faith and cruelty are the best one can expect from the Mohammedans.”

Quellien’s view on Islamophobia was known since 1910 in his book *La politique musulmane dans l’Afrique Occidentale Française*.¹ Lopez notes that Quellien’s work draws heavily on the activities and views of the French colonial department, which to a great extent is mirrored by John Louis Esposito²’s *The Islamic Threat: Myth or*

1. Alain Quellien, *La politique musulmane dans l’Afrique Occidentale Française*, E. Larose, Paris, 1910. Le terme «islamophobie» y apparaît page 133 comme titre d’une sous-partie. The book is on public domain <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6152175h.r=quellien.langFR>.

2. John Louis Esposito, born 1940 in Brooklyn- New York City, is a professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University. He is also the director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.

*Reality?*¹ that reflects the western colonialists' view on Islam and Islamophobia.

Richardson states that the first English print usage was Edward Said's 1985 article "Orientalism Reconsidered".² Another early documented use of the word was by the American news magazine *Insight on the News* in 1991, used to describe Russian activities in Afghanistan,³ and this is the usage listed by the Oxford English Dictionary.⁴

In 1996, the Runnymede Trust established the "Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia", chaired by Professor Gordon Conway, the vice-chancellor of the University of Sussex. Their report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, was launched in November 1997 by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. At this occasion, the term

1. Bravo López, F. (2011). "Towards a definition of Islamophobia: Approximations of the early twentieth century" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34 (4): 556–573. John Louis Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (3rd edition: 1999) ISBN 0-19-513076-6.

2. Richardson, Robin (December 2009). "Islamophobia or anti-muslim racism – or what?" PDF : <http://www.insted.co.uk/anti-muslim-racism.pdf> , Retrieved July 25, 2013.

3. Encyclopedia of Race and Ethics, p. 215.

4. Allen, Christopher (2010). *Islamophobia*. Ashgate Publishing, pp. 5–6. See John Louis Esposito (Chief Editor), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, as editor (2009, 5 volume set) ISBN 978-0-19-530513-5; - *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, as editor (1994) ISBN 0-19-512559-2.

Islamophobia entered into common usage.¹ In the Runnymede report, Islamophobia was defined by the trust as "an outlook or world-view involving an unfounded dread and dislike of Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion and discrimination."²

After 9/11, Islamophobia took a fresh and different path characterized by a redactional emotional behaviour towards all Muslims and Middle Easterners and those that are brown-skinned among Asians. At that time, the largest project monitoring Islamophobia was undertaken by the European Union(EU) watchdog, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). Their May 2002 report "Summary report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001"³, written by Chris Allen and Jorgen S. Nielsen of the University of Birmingham, highlighted the regularity with which ordinary Muslims became targets for abusive and sometimes violent

1. Otterbeck, Jonas; Bevelander, Pieter (2006). *Islamofobi — en studie av begreppet, ungdomars attityder och unga muslimars utsatthet* (in Swedish). Anders Lange. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia. ISBN 91-976073-6-3. Retrieved July 25, 2013.

2. Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnicity, p. 215.

3. Allen, Chris and Nielsen, Jorgen S. "Summary report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001", EUMC, May, 2002; public domain http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/199-Synthesis-report_en.pdf, retrieved August 9, 2013.

retaliatory attacks after 9/11. Despite localized differences within each member nation, the recurrence of attacks on recognizable and visible traits of Islam and Muslims was the report's most significant finding. Incidents consisted of verbal abuse, blaming all Muslims for terrorism, forcibly removing women's hijabs, spitting on Muslims, calling children "Usama", and random assaults. Muslims have been hospitalized and on one occasion paralyzed.¹ The report also discussed the portrayal of Muslims in the media. Inherent negativity, stereotypical images, fantastical representations, and exaggerated caricatures were all identified. The report concluded that "a greater receptivity towards anti-Muslim and other xenophobic ideas and sentiments has, and may well continue, to become more tolerated."²

The EUMC has since released a number of publications related to Islamophobia, including *The Fight against Antisemitism and Islamophobia: Bringing Communities together (European Round Tables Meetings)* (2003)³ and

1. See Report.

2. See Report.

3. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/178-Report-RT3-en.pdf. Retrieved August 9, 2013.

Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia (2006).¹

Kofi Annan asserted at a 2004 conference entitled "Confronting Islamophobia" that the word Islamophobia had to be coined in order to "take account of increasingly widespread bigotry".²

I believe that Islamophobia exercised now in the world is still reactionary to a big extent, and based on a medieval wrong knowledge of Islam. In spite of all the efforts endeavouring to the correction of that image, the wrong image is still dominating in the popular secular sources of knowledge, as well as in apologetic and defensive Christian institutions. This failure in correcting the image of Islam is enhanced also by extremist Muslims' behaviour and the writings of sectarian Muslims whose Islam is based mainly on rarely recognized hadiths or literal interpretation of certain cor'ānic surates. Personally, I do not rule out the involvement of intelligence bodies in maintaining the wrong image of Islam, which is still stuck in the mind of the general public.

1. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/156-Manifestations_EN.pdf. Retrieved August 9, 2013.

2. Annan, Kofi. "Secretary-General, addressing headquarters seminar Wed Confronting Islamophobia", United Nations, press release, December 7, 2004. Reported from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamophobia> July 25, 2013.

2. The Emergence of Christianophobia

“**Anti-Christian sentiment** is an opposition to Christians, the Christian religion, or the practice of Christianity. **Christophobia** or **Christianophobia** are also names for "every form of discrimination and intolerance against Christians" according to Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE).”¹

In fact, the exercise of Christianophobia comes long before that of Islamophobia, may be from the time of the emergence of Christianity in the Roman Empire until the Edit of Milan in 312 AD; through many Islamic regimes (the Fatimids 909-1169; the Mamlouks 1250-1501; the Mongols, 12 and 13th century; the Ottomans; 1501-1914), and the French Revolution (1789-1799). The negative attitude shown by a large number of French people about Christianity is still influenced, to a large extent, by the French Revolution and its religious causes. The Religious Wars that have taken place in Europe after the Reformation and lasted over a hundred years, and the tragedies they produced in terms of human massacres, material losses and social dysfunctions, has made the

1. "Bishops condemn Christianophobia" Religious Intelligence; October 1, 2008, in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianophobia>; retrieved August 12, 2013;

whole of Europe have reserves on giving any religion or religious leader any kind of authority in the modern era.

In spite of the wide exercise of Christianophobia, the term itself emerged by the influence of the fast circulation and the intense use of *Islamophobia* and was applied on “fear of Christianity” and the exercise of discrimination towards faithful Christians.

Christianophobia is exercised intensively these days in the world.¹ Rupert Shortt, Religion Editor of The Times Literary Supplement and a Visiting Fellow of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, entitle his latest book “*Christianophobia: A Faith Under Attack*” (2012).

While Christianophobia is extensively exercised, nowadays, in a big number of Islamic and Arab countries, the most recent serious case of exercising Christianophobia in European Union’s refuse to recognize than Christian legacy’s influence on European culture, values and society.

1. See Rupert Shortt, *Christianophobia*, London: Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2012. http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/Shortt_Christianophobia.pdf, Retrieved August 10, 2013; 2012 Report of the Observatory of *Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe*, on <http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu/> Retrieved August 10, 2013.

3. The Emergence of Religiophobia

Until recently, religious denominations were ethnic and nationalistic: Islam is the religion of Arabs and Eurasians; Christianity is the Religion of Europe and the Americas, Buddhism is centralized in the Far East. This situation has changed a lot in our modern world; now, we can find in one city followers of all the four religions living and working side by side. We live in a multicultural and multireligious world. While Islamophobia and Christianophobia are still exercised in many places, the media speaks now about religiophobia since a number of people see that all religions contain dangerous ideologies and practices on the present and future of our planet earth and its dwellers, thus, they feel themselves responsible for warning people of the dangers of religions, joining secular NGOs aimed at supporting atheistic secularism and combating religion and its risks.

Religiophobia is “An irrational or obsessive fear or anxiety of religion, religious faith, religious people or religious organizations”¹ the term is put in use long time ago; in 1937, Chakravarti wrote: “Hence it is not necessary for the scientists to develop a sort of

1. <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/religiophobia>, retrieved August 12, 2013.

religiophobia nor is it necessary for the religious man to develop an attitude of suspicion against science.”¹

I personally understand and justify some forms of warning against some forms of religiosity; when, in the name of God and for religious purposes, one destroys the country’s infrastructure, kills his neighbour because he is from a different religion and destroys his sacred places and buildings, abuse the others’ properties and violate the people’s human rights. This is what religious fundamentalists are doing nowadays in many places. But it is also wrong to fight religious fundamentalism by considering all religious people as fundamentalist and discriminate them and violate their human rights.

II. When and how does Religion Turn from Restoring Faith to Slaying Ideology?

Being a means to transform human beings to the same nature of the Divine, (monotheistic) religion should be a source of good, and a factor to stimulate love, peace, and justice. Religion should bring to the religious human being psychological balance and happiness, and to

1. A. Chakravarti, *Humanism and Indian Thought*, G.S. Press, 1937,p. 2. Reported by <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/religiophobia>, retrieved August 12, 2013.

society love, peace, justice, equality and other virtues. How could, then, religion become a source of hatred and evil, and a means for committing massacres and producing disasters, what makes religion something very dangerous, which produces fear the some people and make them react against it. Let us see first what is the goal of religion, and then to go to discuss how and when does religion fail to achieve its goal and shift from good to evil.

A. Stewart Woodburne, in an article entitled “the Goal of Religion”, said:

“Although Jesus was not interested in the logic of religion, he used a phrase in regard to his own life work, which is eminently serviceable in describing the purpose of religion: “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10). It is the glorious mission of religion to humanity to enrich life, by giving it a maximum of meaning and value. Its purpose is achieved by conserving the best from the past, by inspiring man to creative endeavors to make present living most satisfying, and by laying

enduring foundations for the happiness and safety of the children of tomorrow.”¹

The author added:

“Our immediate problem is concerned with the realization of the goal of religion up to the limit of our ability under existing conditions. We want to know the best methods for getting the maximum contribution from life in this modern world, for life’s enrichment. Religiously, as well as scientifically and morally, we must take the world as we find it. There is nothing to be gained by shutting out from our purview any of the facts. The world in which we are religious contains factors that hinder as well as those that help. We encounter ugliness as well as beauty, error as well as truth, evil as well as good, suffering as well as happiness. While we are trying to extract from our environing world all that we can for life’s enrichment, we dare not neglect the other side of the picture.”²

1. A. Stewart Woodburne, “The Goal of Religion” in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Apr., 1932), pp. 214-229 Published by: The University of Chicago Press Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1197003>.

2. A. Stewart Woodburne, id, p. 214.

When we read history of religions we find that religion has always been a sensitive matter. Many odd and vague events occurred in religious context; and a lot of things that have been harmful to humanity occurred in the name of religion. Being aware of this, we don't find it surprising that religion becomes a source of fear for some people.

But how can one tell that someone's religious beliefs have crossed the line from good to evil? While we are fully aware that the definitions of "good" and "evil" differ from one person to another, the answer may not be as simple as we think, according to scholars who study all brands of religious extremism. The line between "good" and "evil" in terms of religion is thin, they say, and it's easy to make self-righteous assumptions.

Charles Kimball, a Professor in the Department of Religion at Wake Forest University and also an Adjunct Professor in the Wake Forest Divinity School, author of *When Religion Becomes Evil*, said "There are a lot of warning signs all around us, but we usually learn about them after a Jim Jones¹ or a David Koresh¹,"² Here are four warning signs that Kimball shows in the book:

1. James Warren "Jim" Jones (1931–1978) was the founder and the leader of the Peoples Temple, best known for the cult murder/suicide in 1978, 909 of its members in

1. A religious pretending: I know the truth, and you don't.
2. Beware the charismatic leader.
3. A Religious proclaiming: The end is near.
4. The end justifies the means; we do what people call "evil" to reach a good end.

Kimball' criteria of religious fanaticism are very general and debatable, since every religious believes that his religion has the truth and that the truth cannot be in more than one teaching; and the proclamation the end is near exist in many religions; in every religion there are charismatic leaders.

As to me, I think that religion crosses the borders from good to evil when it becomes a cover and justification

Jonestown, Guyana, and the murder of five individuals at a nearby airstrip. Over 200 children were murdered at Jonestown, almost all of them by cyanide poisoning.

1. David Koresh (born Vernon Wayne Howell; 1959 –1993) was the American leader of the Branch Davidians religious sect, believing himself to be its final prophet. Howell legally changed his name to David Koresh on May 15, 1990 (*Koresh* being the Persian name of Cyrus, called in the Bible- Isiah 45:1- "the Missiah", who ordered the return of the exiled Jews to their territory in today Palestine). A 1993 raid by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the subsequent siege by the FBI ended with the burning of the Branch Davidian ranch outside of Waco, Texas, in McLennan County. Koresh, 54 other adults, and 28 children were found dead after the fire.
2. Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, Harper-Collins 2002, revised and updated edition 2009.

factor for abusing the intrinsic human rights. Intrinsic Human Rights are those individual or communal rights that are derived from the human value of the human being such as right to life, right to human dignity and respect, right to freedom, right to human equality, etc. Seeing the conflict between the individual's rights and the community's interests, I confess that defining each of these rights is far to be easy.

Unlike Thomas Hobbes who argued that all human rights are simply social contracts between government and its people, I believe that the human value of the human being produces to him "natural human rights." The most inalienable natural human rights are:

1. The right to life
2. The right to believe
3. The right to freedom informing his personal, civil, cultural, social and religious identities.
4. The right to equality regardless of gender, race, religion, color, language, disability, or social class.
5. The right to own property
6. The right of protection

The Universal Declaration of Intrinsic Human Rights contains the following rights as being natural and common

to all men:¹

- Article I: Men and women are born and remain forever free and equal.
- Article II: Every citizen has the right to life.
- Article III: No individual will be subjected to servitude without compensation, voluntary or involuntary, or slavery.
- Article IV: The law applies equally to all individuals.
- Article V: Every citizen has the right to express his or her own opinions freely in the medium of print, speech, or writing.
- Article VI: Every citizen has the right to practice his or her own choice of religion.
- Article VII: All individuals shall be permitted to own property. Property rights may only be revoked in cases of eminent domain or in specific judicial circumstances.
- Article VIII: All individuals are entitled to the right of freedom of movement and may at any time choose to leave the country they reside in.

1. http://wikistates.outwardhosting.com/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Intrinsic_Human_Rights, retrieved August 15, 2013.

- Article IX: Every citizen has the right to assemble peacefully and protest acts by any body. No one may be compelled to assemble.
- Article X: Every individual has the right to citizenship and a nationality.
- Article XI: Nothing in this document may be interpreted by any individual or body as giving permission to revoke or cancel any of the rights outlined within it.

Whatever was the number of the natural human rights' lists, it is not impossible to reach a generally acceptable list; and not the purpose of this paper is to do this work. These natural human rights constitute the human value in the human being. This is the image of God in the human being for those who believe in creation. Redemption in Christianity is no more than the restoration of these natural human rights.

I accidentally touched this subject to say that any abuse, from any kind, of the intrinsic human rights in the name of religion is, in my opinion, a passing over of this religion from its good and fair goal to become a means for evil. I also believe that any religion that allows its followers to violate the intrinsic human rights cannot be a religion from God, because the God we know in the three monotheistic religions is the perfect good, love, power and

knowledge; it will be unreasonable if we think that he allows his followers to do evil.

III. Religious Diversity and Unity of Faiths' intent

We have thousands of religions on earth, and this religious diversity is justified by diversity of peoples, cultures and civilizations, geographies and climates, and by the freedom of the human being. Every religion can be divided into two elements: essence- that we may call faith- and practices. Practices are made to express this essential belief and implement it in the character and behavior of the worshiper. Religious practices are largely influenced by culture and geography but the essence of faith is the same because it is linked with the human values in the human nature. For this reason, peoples' religious practices are different or diversified while the essence of faith is the same.

Every *good* religion should have a *good* intent, and should aspire to noble achievements. Said in a different way: every religion that has a good intent is a good religion because it is in harmony with God, the perfect love, and with the value of the human being because it is a gift from God by creation.

Every person's God-given right is to live the life they desire to live in the midst of God's created diversity, as

long as they don't violate the God-given rights of another to do the same or the laws of the society in which they live. We say it in another way: every religious in a certain religion should respect the natural human rights in the other religious who is adept of a different religion, because the respect of these natural human rights is a kind of worship and the goal to achieve by any good religion.

To view certain doctrines of others' religion as wrong and denounce it is one's personal right, but to impose that viewpoint on others and "fight" for measures that would deprive people certain rights because of their religious choice just doesn't seem fair. We are free to be different in everything, including in religion; fighting to impose my religious ideas on others because I believe I am right and they are wrong doesn't seem fair. The first principle of most religions is to do to others what we would want done to ourselves; this is also one of Christ's teachings (Matthew 7:12).

IV. Save Religion from Wrong Religious beliefs, we save society from Religiophobia

In 2009, Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter wrote: "The need to take greater account than in the past of two developments in measures to combat racism and discrimination: the

increasing intertwining of race, ethnicity, culture and religion, and the rise of anti-Semitism, **Christianophobia** and Islamophobia [...]”¹

Religiophobia (including Islamophobia, Christianophobia and other religions phobia) is, without doubt, a violation of human rights; it is discrimination. Religiophobia is exercised by both religious and secular people and against both also. It is not fair to discriminate and persecute some people because of their religious belonging simply for the reason of some misuse of religion.

Those who exercise religiophobia are mistaking, by doing this they commit a number of mistakes, I mention some of them:

1. By refusing all kind of religiosity and discriminating all religious people because some religious fundamentalist misused religion and harmed peoples and societies, practitioners of religiophobia don't show a wide and objective knowledge of religion and ignore all good and noble achievements religion could do to individuals and societies.

2. Religiophobia activists forget all the great achievements accomplished by theologians and clerics in

1. Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter, *Heaven Forbid* (page 56). Reported by <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Christianophobia>. retrieved August 12, 2013.

the fields of science, culture, literature, ethics, thought and arts. These great achievements gave human life a delicious taste, and a beautiful colour; and helped to free societies from slavery, injustice; assisted the poor to produce his food, and the ignorant to acquire knowledge.

3. It is unreasonable to equate between those who are wrongly religious and those are fulfilling an intrinsic need by being religious. Practitioners of religiophobia must differentiate between good and bad religiosity.

4. While religiophobia activists pretend that many awful things happened in the name of religion, they are doing the same awful things in the name of secularism; they discriminate, violate the human rights to freedom and belief.

5. Religiophobia activists must know that not only religious people produced evil things in the name of religion, but also irreligious people did the same in the name of non-religion. Fanaticism in secularism is equal to fanaticism in religion; both are bad and a curse on society.

I suggest two things to fight religiophobia in society:

1. Fighting the bad side of religious fundamentalism (including salafism). As the title suggests, religious fundamentalism has two sides, one good and another bad. The good side is that religious fundamentalism aspires to

the fundamentals of faith aiming at purifying it from wrong interpretations and regaining the zeal of faith. The bad side mainly contains fanaticism, separatism, and absolutism. fundamentalists pretend they have alone the ultimate truth, other faiths have no truth and are from evil; that religious diversity is from evil; that all the other religions' adepts should be invited, by all means (including force) to embrace our religion. Religious fundamentalists refuse any kind of contextualization in terms of understanding their sacred texts, they believe that the sacred text has no time span, it is valid, as it is, verbally, for every time, society or culture. They also refuse hermeneutics by using other sciences like history and culture and they stick to exegesis, even syntactic exegesis; thus they understand the sacred text verbally and aim at applying it verbally even on people that from the same religion but don't share their understand, or from a different religion. This type of religiosity is really a threat to humanity. This type of religiosity offers to religiophobia activists a good reason to be so. Religious fundamentalism prospers usually among poor and uneducated communities; and the best way to fight it, in my opinion, is to improve the economy, educate people, and provide their religious leaders with the possibility of

studying theology on the background of humanities (history, culture, philosophy, linguistics, and sociology).

2. **Shifting from religious diversity to religious pluralism.** “**Religious pluralism** is an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief systems co-existing in society. Diana L. Eck wrote about pluralism:

“First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettos with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.

Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require Christians and Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and ardent secularists to know anything about one another. Tolerance is too thin a foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another, and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly.

Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments. The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments. It means holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.

Fourth, pluralism is based on dialogue. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the “table” will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table—with one’s commitments.”¹

Conclusion

I discussed in this paper the subject of Religio-phobia, including its two branches Islamophobia and Christianophobia. First, I attempted to describe the social circumstances in which these technical terms were

1. Diana L. Eck, “What is Pluralism”, in the Pluralism Project at Harvard University: http://www.pluralism.org/pages/pluralism/what_is_pluralism, retrieved August 15, 2013.

launched declaring that Religiophobia was exercised in many ways during human history. Second, I tried to describe how religious practices can shift from seeking the welfare of people to harming them and violate their natural human rights. Third, I attempted to show although we have religious diversity, all good religions aim at the welfare of individuals and societies. Finally, I offered some suggestions on how to save our societies from the evil of religiophobia.

My goal, in writing this paper, is to encourage good religiosity and exploit it in society building to produce people and citizens that respect the natural human rights. I aimed also to fight both, bad religiosity and religiophobia since these are plagues that destroy societies. Finally I made some practical suggestions to put what I theorized in practice.

Islamophobia

A New Facet of the History of the Relationship Between Islam and the West

Dr. Abdollah El-Seid



Its term:

The term “Phobia” refers to unjustifiable and involuntary fear from certain situation, people, activities, or objects, so it is classified as a psychological disease that must be cured. This disease has many forms such as fear from heights “Acrophobia“, fear from foreigners, “Xenophobia”, and fear from enclosed places, “Claustrophobia” c(1)

The word “ Phobia “, which was basically “Phobos”, is derived from Greek and Latin origins and means a domineering fear in human nature synonymous to “Ruhab”

as it is usually mentioned in the approved terminology of behavioral sciences in the term Arabic language.

The problem started when the term “phobia” was ascribed to Islam where a new expression was born in the language, Islamophobia, which means a pathologic and inexcusable fear from, an enmity against, and a reflection of Islam as well as Muslims.(2)

As a result of this understanding of the term “Islamophobia”, a certain animosity is arisen towards individuals and institutions and this understanding reveals the negative feelings which have invaded the Arabian societies and have been reflected as unfair behaviors regarding Islam and Muslims. Thus, we enter an enclosed circle of fear, malignity, hatred, and abhorrence, along with any other consequence of the negative impact on human rights.

*** Its Emergence /origin**

The first attempt at defining the term was in 1997 where it was determined by the British center, “Runnymede Trust” in its report: “Islamophobia:

A challenge for us all “ as follows:

“islamophobia is a state of unjustifiable enmity against Islam, and therefore a fear or hatred towards all or most

Muslims“(3)

The first French writer who used this term was “Mallet Emile“ in his article, “Culture and Brutality“ which was published in the French magazine “le Monde“ in 1994, in which he talked about one type of “the creepy islamophobia“. Since then, the term have been used worldwide, especially after the events of september 11th 2001 where the world trade center was attacked and destroyed in the USA.

There is no better and more profound definition of “Islamophobia“ Than that mentioned in the report by the European federation which was about the effect of “Islamophobia“ on the youth and this report was published in 2005:

“Islamophobia is the fear from and the prejudgment towards Islam, and Muslims, and everything related to them, whether it was revealed through the daily practice of discrimination or through its more violent forms. “Islamophobia“ is a shocking infraction of human rights and a threat to the social solidarity.”(4)

If we go back in time, we can find tat the first use of the concept of “islamophobia” resides in Western literature and

writings in the last 20th century. This concept was used by the Belgian orientalist Jenry Laminz, in his book about prophet Mohammad. The term was also mentioned by the French painter, Itane Dini, in his book “The east in the eyes of the West“. However, the political dimensions of understanding “Islamophobia” have been crystalised since late 1970s and 1980s of the 20th century upon the emergence of the phenomenon called “the Islam” in the Arab and Islamic world, especially after the Iranian revolution in 1979. Since then, the western interest in studying the phenomenon of the growth of political Islamic and fundamentalist currents and their impact on the West have increased.(5)

Despite mentioning all these details about the original of this term, one must distinguish between two main stages in order to grasp the essence of “islamophobie”: the first stage is before 11 September 2001 and the second is after this ill-omened date. The term has been rarely used in the first stage whereas in the second stage it has become common for everyone in the European countries and the USA. Hence in October 2001 the concept of “Islamophobia” was shown on the website of the European observatory for all forms of Racism and antagonism against foreigners in Vienna, EUMC and the European Net against Racism, ENAR.

However, by 2003 there will have been an academic day to raise the issue of “Racism against Arabs and Islamophobia “In France: (Du Racisme antiarabe à L’islamophobia) by the organization of Ant-Racism Movement and Friendship Among peoples, in addition, the concourse islamophobia in France published its first report in October 21st 2004. yet the most common and controversial definition is stated by the center for facing racism and providing equal opportunities. the report assures:

“islamophobia is loathing and rejection of Islam which is reduced into and evil entity, whereas islam is versatile concerning social, geographic historical, and cultural aspects. This malignity towards Islam feeds on negative and ready-made prejudgments which misinterpret several concepts: Islam, Arabs, Muslim, Islamist, terrorist, fundamentalist, etc. along with an inability to differentiate between cultures and religions.

*** Its structure:**

The term “islamophobia“ is based on propositional and stereotyped postulates which mainly include:

- First, the fundamental bond between Islam and violence .

- Second, the tentative opposition between Islam and democracy.
- Third, the absolute enmity between Islam and secularism. Such postulates have been rooted in the common Western culture. The British report “Islamophobia a challenge for us all”, was issued in 1997 by Runnymede Trust. +
- Trying to abolish racism, this report states that the common use of “Islamophobia“ in the mass media is based on 8 assumed stereotypes:

1- Considering Islam an indivisible and unchangeable body.

2- Viewing Islam as an independent entity which does not have any common values with other cultures; it neither affects other cultures, nor it affected by them.

3- Viewing Islam as inferior to the West, barbarian, irrational, primitive, and sexually dissatisfied.

4- Perceiving Islam as a religion which instigates for violence and hostility and represents a dangerous source for terrorism and struggles of civilizations.

5- Considering Islam a political ideology to obtain political and military interests.

6- Using the Term “Islamphobia” to discriminate against the Muslim minorities and marginalize them.

7- Perceiving hostility towards Islam as natural, normal and acceptable.

8- Rejecting any criticism on the West given by an Islamic party.

These stereotypes of “Islamphobia“ draw a dark picture of Islam and Muslims in the Western societies and contribute to the growth of negative feelings against Muslims. Such feelings are translated to verbal insults, physical assaults, an invasion of worship places, properties and graveyards, lack of facilities in giving Muslims and Arabs passports to western countries, standing firmly against the idea of women wearing scarfs giving no legal permission for Mosques to call to prayer, along with spreading caricature drawings that insult Muslims and belittle their prophet, Mohamad. Moreover, such misdeeds have reached a point where stereotyped pictures of Muslim men with thick beards and angry faces along with veiled Muslim women in black clothes are related to terrorism and the fear of spreading Islam in Europe because of the Muslims immigration and permanent residence there, the attempts at burning the Koran and putting obstacles for Muslims in getting the right job opportunities and participating in the public affair and social, economic, and political life.(8)

Most human rights organizations and opponents of “Islamphobia” in the European policy try get as many voices as possible of the aborigines in the elections. A report issued from the European Union has shown that about half the European people practice oppression against religions minorities, especially Muslims, in the different European countries.

This result has been revealed in a questionnaire done in Germany through asking 8000 citizens from eight different countries: Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Poland, Austria, Portugal and Italy.(9)

Another study done by “the European Center for Racism observation and Xenophobia“ presented a report entitled “Racism and Fear from Islam” in 2006; this report confirms that’s there is discrimination against Muslims in Europe in the domains of sciences education, residence and social status. This discrimination was due to the intricate relationship of “Islamphobia” with a number of political issues during the last three decades especially after the events of September 11th 2001 and the terrorist attacks on Madrid in 2004 and Kondon in 2005.

The increasing wave of “Islamphobia” has encouraged attacks on Muslims and led to more serious consequences like murders arrests, persecution and the imposed feeling

of inferiority. Several charitable organizations were closed and many veiled women were exposed to solicitation as a result of discrimination in the United States of America, especially after the events of 11 September 2001.

In addition, a TV. Commentator in Bill O'Reilly Fox channel equated the Koran with Hitler's book *My Strife* (*Mein Kampf*). The minister Jerry Vines, the previous leader of the Southern Baptist conference which is the largest gathering of protestants in the U.S.A encroached upon Prophet Mohammad and accused him of being demoniac and pedophilic. Priest Jerry Falwell considered prophet Mohammad a terrorist and Priest Graham Franklin gave a speech in the occasion of electing Bush as president of the U.S.A and described Islam as: "a very malignant and evil religion". Likewise, a group called "the New historians of Islam" claim that Prophet Mohammad is not a real historical character and that Koran was compiled centuries after the prophet's death in 632 A.D

Such researchers purport that "Islam can be best understood as an irreligious branch of Judaism(11) /

The editor-in-chief of "National Review" newspaper Richard Lowrt brought forth disputes to a climactic point when he found out the final solution for Muslims: destroying Mecca with the nuclear weapon and forcing the

remaining part of Muslims to profess Christianity as their one and only religion(12).

Briefly, the local authorities in the United States of American can arrest any Muslim youngman in any place in the world without any investigation, especially after the events of September 11th, 2001.

*** Its Causes:**

1- The Historical Reality between Islam and the West:

Talking about the causes of “Islamphobia” paves the way for an intricate issue to deal with because we have to know about the historical events that happened in the past between the Islamic and the Western worlds. Indeed, there have not been any balanced worlds (especially the Arabic one). On the contrary this relationship has encountered ferocious battles that were recorded in different historical periods(13)

“Islamphobia” has been a deep-rooted phenomenon in the Western societies since the middle ages hence, this concept of fear is still remembered nowadays. The military conflict between Islam and the West that started with the Islamic conquests, the expansion of their power, the Muslims’ control over the most important Roman strongholds in the East, along with the Islamic marching

towards the West have stayed in the Western memory and led to malignity and aggression against Islam.

The painful historical events did not limit themselves in the Western mentality to the Barmouk battle where the Muslims triumphed over the Romans. This bitter experience was followed by ferocious fights and radical battles; for example, the Andalusian conquest in 91 of the Hegira, etc martyrs, court battle in 114 of the Hegira where Muslims were about to invade Paris, and conquering Istanbul by the Ottomans in 857 of the Hegira, ect. The episodes of the bloody conflict between Islam and the West are limitless let alone the Crusade wars for regaining Jerusalem, along with the Ottomans, expansion to the borders of Balkan. Hence, according to the West, this Islamic overspread or invasion was at the expense of the geography and demography of Christians. Thus the territories that were subject to the Christian potency have become subject to the Islamic one. Moreover, people who belonged to other religions (most probably Christianity) professed Islam. All these deeds motivated the west to confront the Islamic world not only through military resistance, but also through the diligent work on creating a distorted image of Islam and Muslims. this image has been created by the Christian clergy the distorted image of

Islam and Muslims is based on the belief that prophet Mohammad is deceitful, Koran encourages eroticism and the concept of “Jihad“ instigates people for violence(14). Thus, this image has dominated the Western Christian mentality since that time until the end of the 18th century paving the way for maintaining the concept of “Islamophobia” especially with the two words: Islam and Muslims are related to terrorism, extremism and similar relevant concepts.

The Muslim’s image in the West always has negative connotations and this phenomenon can be noticed in every day life in the Western mass media, flyers, politicians statements, movies, documentary films, ect, all these factors have nourished the Western memory with the ugliest images about Islam and Muslims to the extent that questionnaires of public opinion in the West have revealed the deep-rooted misunderstanding of Islam.

2- Consolidating “Islamophobia” through ignorance of Islam:

There is startling ignorance of the real meaning of Islam, especially in the Western world which receives its information about Islam from subjective and

misleading sources, let alone the Muslims ignorance of the Islam. Academic and scholastic curricula as well as education in the West are full of inaccurate and delusive information about Islam. For instance in Britain 750 novels which misinterpreted Islam were printed in the quarter of the past century and in Germany misinformation about Islam in the curricula was that 10% of Americans think that Muslims worship the moon, 25% of them think that Islam is a religion that instigates violence and aggression, and only 2% know about real Islam(15).

Furthermore, in his book “Covering Islam” the writer Edward Saed tried to clarify the misinterpreted images of Islam and to show the subjectivity and prejudice of reporting events about Muslims by different Western mass media, Sa’ed also Muslims by American scholars for contributing to the continuity of finds out that Islam is presented to the American and European audience as unpleasant news(16). \

In the West, media, academics, experts, governments, and geopolitical strategists agree that Islam is a real threat to the Western civilization(17).

As a reaction to the popular caricature images about Islam and Muslims in the West, many Muslims Consider a defense

mechanism, to encourage enthusiasts use terrorism in order to threaten the Western interests all over the world.

3- The Role of Orientalism:

The concept of “Islamophobia” cannot be separated from that of Orientalism. Otherwise, orientalism should be seen as generating power of “Islamophobia” the orientalists have created this negative thinking about Islam and Muslims in the West. Islamophobia” is a deep-rooted phenomenon that witnessed unsettled relationship between Islam and the West. As presented in several orientalist studies, islam is a real danger concept of “Islamophobia” to the extent that it creates alternative political and social values in the Islamic East. Edward Sa’ed has revealed this distorted portrayal of Islam and its alleged threat to the West(18).

In the Western mentality, no religion can threaten their culture but Islam(19).

The spiritual and moral disputes between the civilizations of Islam and the West are one of the historical reasons of “Islamophobia” this historical enmity was considered by the Easterns the main incentive for the antagonistic relationship between Islam and the West (especially the altitude towards the Palestinian problem, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the negative attitude

towards the Arabic Spring, and the silence that implies consent to the all forms of ethnic and sectarian tensions within the same religion (Sunni, Shia, Alawi, et.)

The phenomenon of “Islamophobia” can be explained according to the philosophical history that’s has worked on rebuilding the European (Western) Ego in order to Western center. Taking this egocentricity into consideration the religious heritage and cultural components of the Western civilization strengthen the belief of the inclination the legality of the Other’s independent existence, the Western egocentricity has played a pivotal role in justifying its right to usurp the other’s fortunes(20)

The science of “Social Anthropology” is based on primitive societies that are considered by the West non-Western: the west is developed and strong while the other (non – western) is primitive and weak Edward Sa’ed assures that “Orientalism is a way of thinking based on ontological and epistemic discrimination. Thus, a large number of Western poets novelists, philosophers, political thinkers economists and colonizers agreed on this discrimination between the West and the East“(21) Edward continues:

“Orientalism was viewed as a common strategy to deal with the East in the late 18th century. It is a successful Western way to have control over the East.(22)

In “covering Islam“ Sa’ed differentiates between the West which has all the qualities of strength might, wisdom, maturity, morality, progress and knowledge and the East which is related to backwardness, perversion, inhumanity and inferiority of the Western “Ego” and the inferiority of the Eastern “Id”; this cultural disparity paves the way for dominating the Eastern fortunes In“ the History of Civilization“ Earnest Roynan claims in 1862 that “the main condition that’s guarantees the continuity of European civilization is destroying everything related to the Semitic culture and theocratic Islam. Once Islam becomes an optional religion, signs of extinction will be gradually apparent. and the continuous war in the world will not vanish until the death of all Ismaili’s ancestors. Islam threatens Europe because it is based on fanaticism(23).

Likewise, the French orientalist Hack Birk (1910-1995) assures that” although Islam is the last heavenly religion and is geographically, and historically close to the West (even morally) it is still viewed as the unknown cousin and the eternal suspect(24).

The origin of orientalism is related in a way or thinking that does not limit itself to religious people, the Western creative artists, like Dante, adopted, described in “the Divine comedy) his imaginative journey to the hereafter and how prophet Mohammad and Ali Ben Abi Taleb were chastised in hell“(25). Through the Italian poet was unconsciously influenced by Abu alaa Maari and Ibn Arabi. This unconscious influence by the Arabi and Islamic culture emphasizes the refusal of Western Ideology of the Islamic civilization as a whole because of the western critics especially Italians dismissal of any Arabic allusions in the Divine comedy by Dante.

The Pope Benedictos 16th adopted from a Byzantine emperor the following comment: “Mohammad did not come with anything new to humanity; he instigates people to evil and inhumane acts like spreading Islam Arabs and Muslims due to Orientalism show a lot of ignorance concerning the civilization and history of Islam along with the Muslims, civilized contributions in different domains of life, let alone the Muslims, achievements that helped the West in its progress.

Moreover we wonder whether pope Benedictos had known that Muslims were able to light Cordova with lamps at the time there were not any lamps in the dark

streets of London for seven centuries ., It is noteworthy to mention that Pope Selevestros the second (999-1003) spent 3 years in Andalusia where he learned Mathematics, philosophy and jurisprudence by Muslim's scholars(27)

No one can deny the positive impact of the Islamic civilization on Europe. For example, the Muslim scientist "Zeryab" was the first one who set the rules of decorum and etiquette. The Islamic civilization suffered from European fanaticism with the head of Akziminis bishops ordered to burn 8000 books written by Arabs and Muslims who departed from volumes that represented eight centuries of perpetual research and effort were burnt; can't we consider this misdeed a cultural crime?(28)

In addition, no mature person can accept such accusations against Islam and doubts about Prophet Mohammad. This Western misunderstanding of Islam and Arabs does not include all westerns; to be as objective as possible some orientalist exerted huge efforts to clarify this distorted image of Islam through their valid researches and translation. They tried to build a cultural bridge between the west and the East in order to combine both cultures together and get benefit from the mutual knowledge of civilizations.

Human rights at the time it deprives a whole culture of its own rights and history ? and is it logical to accept that some cultures are born with a predisposition to development and flourish while others inherit ignorance and backwardness by nature ???

The Western media has widely used stereotypes and prejudice against. based on the outcomes of the orientalist Schoull, the Western media has been diligently working on relating terrorism and violence to Islam. This western non-stop mission is working nowadays on portraying the Arabic Spring (what is happening in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya) as a sign of disorder and chaos prepared by a bunch of terrorists.

In deed, these natural reactions against dictators and oppression are real revolutions, yet the western media insists on showing the misdeeds of unorganized minorities as the real event in these revolutions.

Pictures of massacre and bloody events are displayed by the Western media as an Islamic act based word is repeated via all western mass media as well is repeated via all western mass media as word is repeated via all western mass media as well as some Arabic channels which abide by the Western political system. was not it a surprising event for the Egyptian minister of Defense “Sisi” to ask

his people for delegation to get rid of terrorism after the upheaval against democracy in Egypt? Where is democracy in the western world? How come the western as well as the Arabic media cover silently and indifferently the massacres in Egypt? And how can we accept the closure of some channels which resist this?

5- confusion between the Islamic religion and the Muslim's situation:

The intricate confusion between the Islamic religion and the situation of Muslims has enhanced the idea of "islamophobia". This instability is evident, since the Arabic and Islamic nation has suffered for several centuries from backwardness and social, cultural, political and economic deterioration. The bitter situation has led the Islamic nations' inability to progress and participate in mounting up the ladder of flourish meat.

On the political level, the ferocious wars and disputes have caused the death of thousands of Muslim's in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan Sudan and Algiers (along with Libya and Syria lately). In this atmosphere of tension and struggles, the Islamic countries seem incapable of finding any solutions to stop such conflicts.

Besides, many Islamic countries are subject in a way or another to foreign forces that restrict their freedom and independence.

On the economic level some surveys indicate that more than half a billion Arabs suffer from poverty in spite of the huge human and natural resources found in the Arabic and Islamic countries(37). In the Arabic world, the surveys point out that there are about 40 million Arabs who suffer from malnutrition and about 100 million Arabs who are poverty –stricken due to the failure of development plans, corruption, and unfair distribution of fortunes. For example, in Somalia 3.5 million Somalies are threatened by the ghost of famine which is equivalent to 45% of the population.

In Iraq, reports issued from the Ministry of Planning and Development showed in the late 2007 that 60% of Iraqis are poverty-stricken. While in Gaza sector, some local reports denote that the percentage of poverty has reached 90%. Like, in Egypt the most overpopulated Arabic country, a report issued from the national council assures that 45% of Egyptians do not get enough food and suffer from malnutrition. The report also discloses that 35% of women, and 53% of children in Egypt live in poor conditions. With respect to Sudan, the national council

declares the percentage of poverty in the country ranges from 45% to 95%. In other Arabic countries the percentages differ from one country to another, although most reports indicate to the failure of the Arabic policies to prevent poverty let alone the bitter fact of unemployment and its negative impact on the social, political, and economic structures of society(38).

On the social level, there is shocking inequality among classes which increases year after year to the extent that the middle class hardly exists.

Unfortunately, the rich minority usurps everything, and widens the gap of poverty. Other social outcome include: unemployment, women's oppression and dependence, the youth's marginalized role, children's bad conditions in addition to the absence of moral values (especially after the invasion of western values).

On the cultural level, the west has imposed its culture on the Islamic world through globalization stereotyping moral values, and trying to generalize its culture over humanity as a whole regarding food, clothes familial relationships and gender the cultural invasion also includes everything related to individual and social human life, especially consuming, values that represent the cornerstone of the economy of globalization. For instance, the Egyptian organization of

Human Rights was criticized by European organizations that decided not to help the former. This decision was due to the Egyptian organization's inaction towards the Egyptians who were accused of sexual perversion and arrested by Egyptian authorities.

The West has also accused conventional countries of "fundamental Radicalism".

The Islamic and Arabic world has faced many challenges including revolutions of knowledge and computer sciences. It is considered the least creative concerning this domain. Hence, the Islamic and Arabic world must awaken in order to exist in this cultural battle; this awakening is based on independence (with all its dimensions) in order to contribute the progress of civilizations and withstand several universal challenges like: poverty, backwardness, illiteracy, unemployment environmental problems, wars, genocide, sectarianism, radicalism, and terrorism.

These problems are universal, so everyone is responsible for finding the best solutions, not only Muslims and Arabs.

But at the same time Muslims and Arabs are required to give the true image about Islam in the West through self-awareness and self-criticism.

6- The worry about the increasing number of Muslims in the west:

It is believed that the development of the phenomenon of “islamophobia” is due to the increasing number of Muslims in the West. This fact is viewed by the westerners as a real threat to the demographic structure of the western community (Euro-American). John Spozeto comments on the root of conflict between Islam and the west: ”The gradual spread of Muslims in the Christian west (as demographic power which sustains its cultural and religious identity) represents a cultural, religious, and political challenge to Muslims. In Christianity, Islam has a universal message to convey, therefore it is natural to expect such confrontations”(39).

Furthermore, Islam is the most widespread religion in the world. According to surveys issued from the American center for research “BEO”, in 2009, the number of Muslims was estimated about 1.57 billion which is equivalent to 23% of the world population. This center considered Islam the most thriving religion in Europe because of immigration and the increase of birth rate. All these factors have led to the multiplication of the number of Muslims during the last 30 years. The foundation of international peace, Carnegie, found out in 2007 that the

rate of population growth of Muslims is 1.84% while that of Christians is 1.32%. This growth urges Vittorio Formente to say in an interview to the Vatikan newspaper: “ It Is the first time in history that the number of Muslims exceeds that of Catholics”. The Catholics represent 17.4% of world population, while the Muslims 19.2%. The number of Muslims in Europe reached 53 million in 2007, 16 million of them live in European countries. If we have a look at France, for example, we find out that the birthrate is 1.8%, while is 8.1% with respect to Muslims. The percentage of Muslim residents under 20 in big cities such as Paris, nis, Marcialia is 30%; this percentage is expected to go up to 45% in 2027 which means that over a fifth of the French inhabitants will be Muslims in the coming 39 years.

In Britain, the number of Muslims raise from 82 thousand to 2.5million in the last thirty years. The government of the European Union declared that one third of the newborns in Europe will have been Muslims by 2025. According to the American channel, NBC, 20.000 Americans profess Islam every year and 25% of the Muslims in the United States have recently professed Islam. A new survey issued from “Bio Center in 2011 indicates that Muslims represent 7.2% in Europe(40).

Finally, the real threat is not represented by the increasing number of Muslims in the West, but in the historical enmity between Islam and the Christian west because of the deep-rooted concept of “islamophobia”.

The relationship between these two pole is based on mutual fear and destruct. At the time Christianity relinquished its power in the East during the Byzantium period, because of the Islamic cultural diffusion outside the Arabic island, the increasing number of Muslims in the European societies is considered a real threat to Christianity.

Through this historical context, the world has to face a new form of struggle between Islam and Christianity- What is known today as “Islamophobia“. In his book “the struggle of civilizations”, Hotington points out that the future struggle will not be ideological or similar to the Cold War between the Soviet bloc and the western powers (socialism and capitalism); on the contrary, the conflict is going to be between civilizations, especially the Western and Islamic one(41). Similarly, Bernard Louis believes that “ the Western world is threatened by an inextricable movement which exceeds the level. Of policies and their governments; it is the struggle of civilizations ...

Although it is irrational, it is undoubtedly a historical reaction against an old opponent of our Jewish and Christian heritage as well as our present secularism“.(42)

The events of September 11th, 2001 make us wonder about the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by the Western confederacy. What urges some peoples who had bitter experiences in the past regarding religious enmity to adopt the theory of religious, struggle and accuse other cultures of “Otherness”?

The rabid religious policies against foreigners and minorities pave the way for more tension and loss of peaceful coexistence among different cultures. we have to learn from our past experiences the importance of peace and the danger of prejudice; this moral lesson must be taught by the policies of Western countries, because they play a pivotal role in spreading human attitudes towards religions.

This role is not limited to the external policies; it must be played by the elites of scientists, intellectual, authors, educators, mass media and other modern communications networks. European and Islamic human rights organizations must work together to reduce the impact of “Islamophobia” on the western world and make it clear for everyone that it is true that “violence leads to Phobia, yet phobia lead to violence as well“.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of “ Islamophobia “ has intricate elements, divergent dimensions interlocked relations, and ineradicable consequences. The western misunderstanding of Islam is due to two main reasons: the westerners’ prejudice and the Muslims’ refusal of self-criticism.

Firstly, the west has taken its knowledge about Islam from the inherited orientalism and subjective historical records along with the irresponsible and radical behaviors of some Muslims (such as explosions, kidnapping, killing...).

The exploitation of the western media of such misdeeds and the relation of terrorist acts to Islamic creeds have led to negative accumulation in the western mentality and encouraged the spread of islamophobia “. Secondly, the Muslims’ inability to wake up from their cultural coma has prevented them from knowing what is going on in their societies and the western societies as well. This problem needs all possible Islamic efforts in order to come out with a comprehensive strategic plan-a plan which removes all obstacles between – the Islamic countries and the rest of the world such goals can be obtained:

1- Presenting the Moderate Islam: In the holy book, Koran, God Said: ”I created you a moderate nation as witnesses to people while the prophet is a witness to

you“(43). Moderation means Islamic justice and balance in all living aspects and Islam must be presented as a religion which encourages education, ethics, good behavior, justice, tolerance and altruism. the west did not have the opportunity to know real Islam; to the Westerns, Islam Instigates radicalism, fanaticism, and isolationism. Thus, we have to re-evaluate Islam, look at it with new eyes, and improve our conduct instead of just theorizing. In this way, we can convince others by giving the best Islamic sample to the whole world. the perfect way to face the influence of “Islamophobia” on others minds is by discretion “Ijtihad” which opens the door for logical thinking.

2- Having a vested interest in Media: the western and Islamic media must exert huge efforts to change the negative image of Islam and Muslims in the western societies. Hence, we have to start discussing all complicated issued with intellectual leaders and representatives of media in the western countries through the organizations of the civil community in the Islamic world. this step-westerns and Easterns, the responsibility of spreading real Islam also lies on the Muslim residents in the Western countries; they have to work diligently in order to fight the stereotyped image of Islam and Muslims. Moreover, the role of the Islamic Educational Scientific

and cultural organization, ESESCO, invited the media to produce new programs movies and reports which reveal the real image of Islam. there is also an invitation to make a business office is also an invitation to make business for supporting objective mass media and activities of public relations that are against: Islamophobia“.

3- Taking care of Islamic Communities in the west: Such communities are the most effective factor in presenting the true image of Islam because they can have direct communication with Westerns. Islamic communities have to practice what Islam preaches; otherwise, no one will listen to mere admonitions as long as the Muslims’ conduct does not reflect the essence of Islam. Therefore, establishing special Islamic centers in the western countries gives the researchers an opportunity to eliminate the remnants of “Islamophobia “. This step requires the cooperation of different islamic organizations in the Islamic world like “Al-Azhar”, “Asharif”, league of Islamic universities, and other scientific and research assemblies in the Islamic world .

To conclude, I would like to refer to Akbar Ahmad’s opinion in his book “Islam under the Seige”: if justice and mercy dominated the Islamic world, if Muslim governors were straightforward and honest, and if Muslims could

practice the Islamic admonitions then Islam would not be a threat to anyone and would encourage peaceful co-existence among cultures“(44). The events of 11 September, 2001 seem to push the world towards a struggle of civilizations, but at the same time they have motivated us to know more about other cultures and attempt at finding a practical way to build a cultural bridge between the west and the east. The challenge that is going to face the human civilization in the 21st century is related to the effective participation in the communication of civilizations, and the search for an internal balance between traditions and needs in the local communities on one hand, and a world dominated by the desire for monopoly and control on the other. Both sides must work together in order to find solutions to universal problems and come out with a new political system that spread justice and peace in the world. We need to learn mercy from God, the Merciful, and face all challenges and hindrances so that we deserve the little of human beings.

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*Violation
Of
The Rights
Of
Shia Minorities*

The Sectarian Unrest in Syria

A Genocide In The Making Against Shi'a Muslim

Dr. Bashar Baghdadi



1) Introduction

1.1) The History of Shia in Syria

Islam spread in Levant¹ after the conquest of Damascus in the 13 years after migration of prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

The people of Syria were affected by the Umayyad era leaders political views, and there was oppression to Imam Ali followers (Twelver Shias¹).

1. Levant is the eastern part of the Mediterranean with its islands and neighboring countries, includes modern day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

The Abbasids followed the Umayyads and again the oppression of Shia continued. This situation continued to the year 333AH, i.e., to the area of Sayf al-Dawla ibn Hamdan where Shiism² began to spread in the Levant. The situation of Shia witnessed a sustained prosperity continued throughout the Fatimid state era.

We need to recall that Ayyubid state has done everything in its power to suppress Shiites and clear them from the Levant. The Ottoman followed their ancestor the Ayyubid in the fight against Shia³.

Despite of the huge oppression of Shias in Levant, they continue to make a humble presence in the countryside of what is known nowadays of Homs, Aleppo and Idlib. They also live in Damascus and Busra al-Sham.

The Shias in Syria are well known about their nationalist political view and they always refuse to divide the Syrian communities according to their sect, religion or ethnic minorities. They always believe that Syria, as a country, is an umbrella of all different sects and ethnicities

1. Although the term "Shias" is an umbrella term, that constitutes many sects, in this report we will use it to refer to Twelver/Imami Shias only.

2. Shiism refers to the adherent of the Shia branch of Islam.

3. Tebyan Cultural and Information Center, Shias in Levant (in Arabic), 2011, 2011, <http://arabic.tebyan.net/index.aspx?pid=154199>

that can live together in harmony. The attitude of their leader Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin al-'Amili (d. 1371 AH), when Syria was a French colony, in refusing to give dedicated seats in the parliament to ethnic minorities is a clear example of that¹. This point of view still stands with current Syria Shia prominent figures (such as Sayyed Abdulla Nizamand Sheikh Nabil Al-Hilbawi²)

1.2) Demographic and religions distribution in Syria

The country has an area of 185,180sq kilometres and a population of 22.5 million³. Sunni Muslims represented approximately 74% of the population. Other Muslim groups; including Alawites (11.0%), Twelvers (1%), Ismailis (0.5%), or Zaydis (0.5%); constituted an estimated 13% of the population. The Druze accounted for an estimated 3% of the population. Various Christian denominations made up the remaining 10% of the population⁴.

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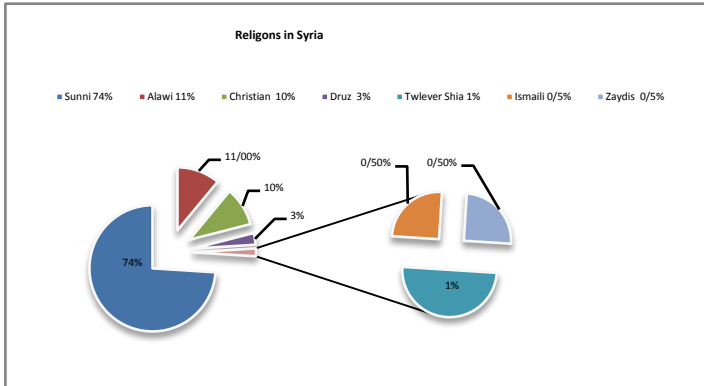


Figure 1. Religions in Syria

Sunni Muslims were present throughout the country. Christians tended to be urbanized, and most lived in Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia, although significant numbers lived in Hasaka governorate in the northeast.

The current Shia (Twelvers) population is approximately 315,000 they are distributed as follow:

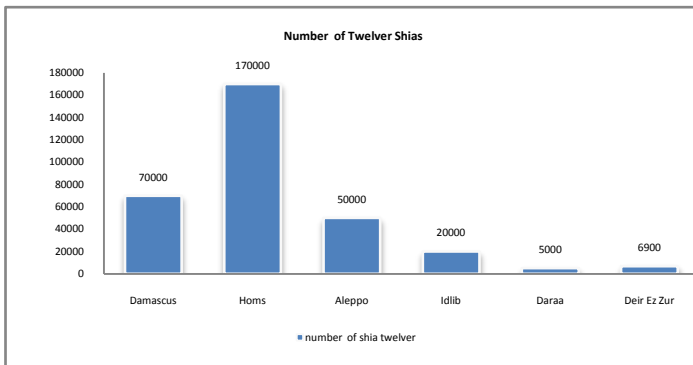


Figure 2. Twelver Shias in Syria by province

1.3) Syria after March 2011

Syria represents a unique complexity and mixture of ethnicities¹, religions and sects². 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, the country slid into unchartered territory.

Since the alleged uprising there was influx of militant groups “Jihadist” many of these groups like Alnusra Front (linked to al Qaida), which was recognized as a foreign terrorist group by the UN³ in May 2013 and the US in December 2012⁴.

1. Arabs, Assyrians, Kurds, Armenians, Turkmen and Circassians.

2. Sunnis, Twelver Shi’as, Ismaili Shia’s, Alawites, Druzes, Christians (Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Protestants) and Zaydis

3. Benari, E., UN Blacklists Syrian Al-Nusra Front, 2013, www.israelnationalnews.com/News/news.aspx/168502

4. Syria's al-Nusra Front, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18048033>

These militant groups are strange to Syrian and come from many regional and international countries. Initially it was perceived that the aim for these groups is to help Syrian people to topple the current government.

But as days passed by (29 months since the uprising) the real aim for these jihadist groups is begin to unfold and become obvious they wants to destroy any civilized society and wants to raise their Islamic state (Afghanistan-Islamic style state) across Syria and Iraq¹.

They start to instigate a sectarian war by terrorizing and killing minorities, mainly Twelver Shia. Their attacks are dictated by their ideology witch says that Shia are infidels.

Terrorizing Shia has been conducted in many ways not exclusively:

- Attacking the prominent figures such as religious figures and Muslim Shias scholars (Ulamaa) and the social elites.
- Killing and kidnapping Shia people from their hometown, villages, and place of work.

1. The Islamic State and Al-Nusra Front (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alhadathnews.net/archives/92444>

- Force migration from their villages and Sabotage their places of works like farms, factories, shops & pharmacies.

- Mass killing by using barbaric ways; like cutting heads, pulling the body of dead people by cars in front of other people in the village or towns and hang their bodies in public places.

- Destroying their place of worship and pray: shrines, mosques and Hussainias¹.

- Enforce social isolation by making it difficult for Syrian Shia to live in harmony with Sunni communities by promoting hate rage between Shia and Sunni throughout media outlets such as TV satellite and internet web sites.

- Besieging Shia dominated cities and isolated them from any outside contacts.

1.4) Shia circumstances in Syria during the unrest

The table below summarize the Shia current situation As a result of what is going on Syria for the last 28 months.

1. Hussainias are places for commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain's (AS)

Table 1. Damage to Shias in Syria by province

City	Damascus and its surrounding	Aleppo-nubole and Alzahra	Homs and its surrounding	Idlib: Kafria and Fowa	Dara:busraalsham	Deirez-Zorand its surrounding	The rest of shia in Syria
Population	75000	65000	170000	30000	20000	6000	5000
Number of families	15000	13000	40000	6000	4000	1200	1000
The forced migrated families out	7500	500	6500	104	500	N/A	N/A
The number of family who migrate into	6500	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The number family who are besieged	N/A	12500	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Martyrs	348	212	492	170	48	38	N/A
Missing	174	65	196	80	17	50	N/A
Wounded	513	300	700	82	45	N/A	N/A
Kidnapped	109	>200	N/A	>200	40	N/A	N/A

1.5) Notable statistics and information

- Force migration More than 75% of the forced migrated families has lost all their possessions, lands, properties and jobs.

- The kidnapping: around 300 million Syria pounds are paid as ransoms to liberate the kidnapped people.
- Unemployment in cities: in large Cities: 65% of Shia youth abundant their jobs and turned into guards for families and properties.
- Unemployment around: in towns and Villages: 75% of labour forced to give up their jobs and turned into guards for their families and their properties.
- 90% of school age children left their school and are deprived from their basic right to learn: parents are not willing to risk the life of their children by sending them to schools which in turn are regularly destroyed and/or used as strongholds for the armed groups.
- Reported cases of Leishmaniasis and other gastrointestinal diseases are increasing at alarming speed among villagers and farmers who lost all access to clean water and basic sanitation tools.
- Almost all Shia mosques and Hussainias were subjects to destruction, looting and burning down.
- Shia shrines: are under constant attacks by the armed groups

2) Attack on prominent figures

One of obvious methods used to terrorise Shia and instigate a sectarian war between Shia and Sunni was targeting important religious scholars. By killing a well-known figure in the community one can firstly spread terror throughout the entire community; secondly create chaos at the leadership level.

Other highly influential figures have been terrorized or sent threatening letters, stating they are under close supervision and they may be attacked or their families harmed at any moment. This is causing the secretion tension to escalate to a never before seen levels. One of the top Shia leaders in the area of Sham, Sayyed Ali al-Makki al-Amili, who used to live in old Damascus, now moved to Lebanon after much personal harassment. Sayyed Abdullah Nizam and Sheikh Nabil Al-Hilbawi(two of the most influential Shia figures in Damascus) along with a number of other highly respected members of the Shia community have been sent directly addressed death threat, for their clear Shia stand. Those people are now forced to stay within certain geographic limits restricting them from fulfilling their expected duties.

Not only are the Muslim Shia scholars victims of terrorism, but also many of social elite and influential

people in the local Shia communities such as merchant, factories owners, doctors, lawyers and many universities degree holders are being viciously targeted as well.

These below are some examples supported by evidence of targeting prominent and religious figures.

2.1) Sheikh Abbas Al-Lahham: the Imam of Sayyed Ruqayya's mosque in Damascus, a father of 4 children and a holder of two university degrees who was shut dead.^{1,2,3,4&5.}

2.2) Sheikh Ali Alishi: the Imam of Kafer al Abad Mosque and a father of 7 children who was killed by an armed group^{6.}

2.3) Sayyed Naser Al-Alawi: Imam of Al Hussainia in Sayidah Zaynab^{7.}

1. Jafria News, 2012, <http://jafrianews.com/2012/05/16/syrian-terrorists-assassinate-pesh-imam-of-sayyeda-ruqayya-mosque/>

2. Jafria News, 2012, <http://jafrianews.com/2012/05/16/syrian-terrorists-assassinate-pesh-imam-of-sayyeda-ruqayya-mosque/>

3. AltawthiqCenter (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/1KjycN>

4. <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?eid=88459&frid=31&seccatid=91&cid=31&fromval=1>

5. Syrian Center for Documentation, 2012, <http://www.documents.sy/image.php?id=632&lang=en>

6. AltawthiqCenter, 2012, <http://www.altawthiq.com/en/832/>

7. Jafria News, 2013, <http://jafrianews.com/2012/04/16/head-of-hawza-e-zainabia-martyred-by-target-killing-in-syria/>

2.4) Sayyed Abdul-QuddusJebra: a Shia cleric who was assassinated and his sister injured near the shrine of Sayidah Zaynab¹.

2.5) Mr. Hassan AL-Saleh: the imam of Sayidah Fatima Alzahra mosque in Al-Raqqa. He was assassinated².

2.6) Sheikh Zidane Ghazali: the Imam of and Ali bin Abi Talib (AS) Mosque in Daraa who was kidnapped and tortured but managed to escape. The Imam also was subject to two failed assassination attempts before³⁴.

3)Terrorising by killing and kidnapping

Killing and kidnapping are used by the armed groups and proved to be very influential method in terrorizing people. It affects all age groups: unborn babies, children and elderly people. Women and young children were soft targets.

The killing took ugly barbaric ways like: decapitating, hanging children, tie people to cars and dragging them on town's road in front of people.

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1. Shiite News, Syrian Shia Cleric Sayyed Abdul QuddousJebra Martyred, 2012, <http://www.shiitenews.com/index.php/middle-east/4548-syrian-shia-cleric-sayyed-abdul-quddous-jebara-martyred>
 2. AltawthiqCenter (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/IIF49A>
 3. AltawthiqCenter (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/dx6OvJ>
 4. AltawthiqCenter (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/XoZWJj>

The killing was by different tools: swords, rifles, snipers gun, knives and mortars shells, and suicide bombing.

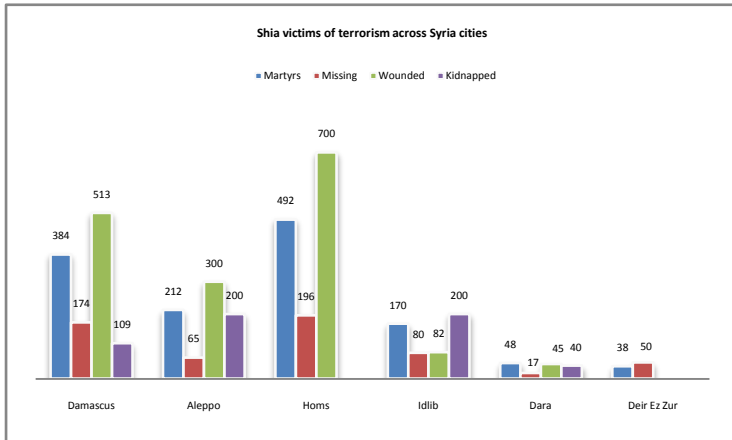
The mental sequences of kidnapping and killing was so intense among children and women , raised number of mental diseases, depression, post traumatic disorder were noticed across the entire Shia communities.

In addition to mental disease, as a result of this brutal killing and kidnapping, people stopped going to their works and stayed home to protect their families, children stopped going to school.

It is estimated that 65% of Shia youth in big cities abandon their jobs and turned into guards for families and properties.

In villages 75% of labour force were forced to give up their jobs and turned into guards for their families and their properties.

90% of school age children left their school and deprived from their basic right to learn: parents are not willing to risk the life of their children when sending them to school which in turn destroyed or used as a strong hold by armed groups.



Kidnapping, in many cases, was followed by demanding a huge ransom or release after permanent disabilities.

Figure 3 Categorized Shia victims of terrorism by province.

4) Targeting Shrines

It is one of the paramount missions by the armed groups who want to destroy Shia peaceful coexistence with other sects and religious groups in Syria. The actions of these armed groups are clearly stirring a sectarian war¹.

1. Sherlock, R., Syrian rebels accused of sectarian murders, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10236362/Syrian-rebels-accused-of-sectarian-murders.html>

There has been overwhelming evidence of targeting shrines of Muslim figures such as prophet Mohammed (PBUH) granddaughter and his dignified closed companion Hijer ibn Adi (RA) who are respected by all Muslims but purposefully or ignorantly portrayed in most of media outlets as exclusive to Shia Muslims¹.

Among these targeted shrines are:

4.1) The Holy Shrine of Sayidah Zaynab

This shrine houses the tomb of the granddaughter of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The shrine is facing constant threat from armed groups aiming to evict or killed its visitors and destroy the shrine². In fact there have been many attacks against the holly shrine and its visitors³.

4.2) Holy shrine of companion Hujr Ibn Adi

1. Hof, F.C. & Simon, A., *Sectarian Violence in Syria's Civil War: Causes, Consequences, and Recommendations for Mitigation*, The Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/pdf/syria-report.pdf>

2. McDonnell, P.J., *Two Syria shrine towns: Worlds apart yet united in battle*, 2013, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-syria-sednaya-20130630,0,2150161.story>

3. AhlulBaytNews Agency, *Sayyida Zeinab Shrine After Attack*, 2013, <http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=443570>

The shrine of Hujr ibn Adi(RA), a dignified and a close companion of prophet Mohammed (PBUH), located in Adra was brutally attacked and completely destroyed with his holy body pulled out from his grave¹. The Militants who desecrated the shrine probably did so because this close companion (Sahaba) of the prophet (PBUH) was a loyal supporter of Imam Ali (AS) and is especially regarded by Shia Muslims². Furthermore, In order to hurt Shia even more, the Takfirmilitias have exhumed his holy body and took it to an unknown location^{3,4}. This outrageous deed is an atrocity and an abomination; against not only Muslims but also all humanity! Digging out the body of such significant figure can't be tolerated in a civilized world. The fact that the remains of the holy body was removed to an undisclosed location after destroying the holy shrine added insult to injury, and was sorrowfully receive.

1. Same reference

2. Press TV, Syria will attend Iran president-elect's swearing-in ceremony: Syrian PM, 2013, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/07/22/314971/syria-to-attend-rohanis-swearingin/>

3. AhlulBayt Islamic Mission, Shrine of the great companion HijribnAdi destroyed and body reportedly exhumed, 2013, <http://www.aimislam.com/shrine-of-the-great-companion-hijr-ibn-adi-destroyed-and-body-stolen>

4. AhlulBayt News Agency, SayyidaZeinab Shrine After Attack, 2013, <http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=443570>

New York Times reported this incident as a raid led by the “rebels” that resulted in the destruction¹ of the shrine and abduction of the body². As of the moment of the writing of this report, there has been no news of the whereabouts and the condition of the remains of the holy body. The grave remains open as a reminder of the atrocity that took place there.

4.3) Holy shrine of SayidahSukayna

Sayidah Sukayna is a well-known figure in Islamic history believed to be the daughter of Imam Hussein (as). The Holy shrine of Sayidah Sukayna (AS) in Darraya, Syria is almost completely damaged as a result of numerous and continuous attacks^{3,4,5,1,2&3} by the armed groups who took

1. Before its News, 2013, beforeitsnews.com/opinion-conservative/2013/05/syria-insurgents-destroyed-the-shrine-of-hajar-bin-adi-a-companion-of-the-prophet-2633816.html

2. Erdbrink, T. and Mourtada, H., Iran Warns Syrian Rebels After Report of Shrine Desecration, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/07/world/middleeast/iran-warns-syrian-rebels-after-report-of-shrine-desecration.html?_r=0

3. Al-Alam International News Channel, Destruction of the Shrine of SayidahSukayna, (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1484166>

4. Al-Alam International News Channel, Al-Alam at the Shrine of SayidahSukayna (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1461319>

5. Al-Alam International News Channel, Blind Salafism in Syria (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1454459>

the shrine as a stronghold to launch their terrorist attacks to nearing neighbourhood.

A series of atrocities took place within this holy shrine; these include burning of the religious and historic library, looting all valuable contents and furniture, transforming the halls of worship into storage units for weaponry stockpiles, not to mention the destruction of one of the minarets of Islamic Heritage and a historically important site.

4.4) Holy shrine of Prophet Ibrahim

Al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front terrorists have destroyed the historic mausoleum of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) on the 6th June 2013⁴; a video emerged showing the terrorists bulldozing the holy site in the eastern town of Ayn al-Arous in the province of Raqqa, Syria⁵.

4.5) Holy shrine of companion Ammar ibn Yasir

1. Al-Alam International News Channel, Targetting Mosques and Shrines (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1270214>

2. AltawthiqCenter (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/n3gsdN>

3. Jafria News, 2013, <http://jafrianews.com/2013/02/16/holy-shrine-of-bibi-sakina-s-a-partly-damaged-by-the-attack-of-wahabi-terrorist/>

4. AhlulBayt News Agency, SayidahZeinab Shrine After Attack, 2013, <http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=443570>

5. Jafria News, 2013, <http://jafrianews.com/2013/06/06/saudi-sponsored-wahhabi-terrorists-bulldoze-prophet-abraham-shrine-in-syria/>

Ammar ibn Yasir was a dignified and a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He was one of the Muhajirun, and referred to as by Shia Muslims as one of the Four Companions.

Videos posted online show “foreign-backed militants” blew up his tomb in the northern city of Raqqa¹.

5) A Genocide in the Making

The most disturbing and horrific acts of violence against Shias 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 armed groups (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, armed groups 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-

1. Press TV, Militants blow up Muslim shrine in Syria’s Raqqa, 2013, <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2013/03/12/293239/militants-destroy-muslim-shrine-in-syria/>

blank executions, slaughtering, and beheadings of men, women, children, and the elderly alike...

5.1) Besieging Towns

There are masses of evidence in wide spread circulation on the web and in main stream media describing tight and persistent siege of Shia towns and cities by armed groups. A case in point is the 65,000 strong population of Nubbul and Al-Zahra being under siege for over a year at the time of writing of this report. This includes women, children and elderly people. Other notable examples being the towns Fuaa, Kafrayya.

5.1.1) Nubul and Zahraa

The two cities of Nubbul and Al-Zahra are located 20 KM to the North West of Aleppo (the second largest city in Syria). The two cities are inhabited with 65,000 inhabitants¹. Nubbul and Al-Zahra have been under siege for the last 11 months^{1&2}, with no basic access to basic needs material including food, water, electricity and medical supplies.

1. Al-Manar, Armed Groups Launch Attack on Nubbul and Zahraa, 2013, <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?eid=100829&cid=23&fromval=1>

2. The Documentation Center for Human Suffering, Report on Nubbul and Al-Zahra, 2013

Failing to break the tight siege, the government is deploying helicopters to transfer basic needs materials but they are rarely successful! What started as a daily help act has now been reduced to a three times a week help. Still, these much-awaited helicopters by the inhabitants of the besieged cities are sometimes being shot down by the armed groups¹. Some people are even being forced to feed their children tree leaves in a desperate attempt to avoid starvation to death.

The death toll of the two cities reached 150 victims^{2&3}, most of them died by rockets and mortar shells, which occur on a regular basis^{4, 5, 6, 7}. Also cases of death by snipers are being reported on a daily basis, the snipers are base in the

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1. The Battle against Nubbul and Al-Zahraa (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/LoNWD0>
 2. The Documentation Center for Human Suffering, Report on Nubbul and Al-Zahra, 2013
 3. Murtada, H., Nubbul and Al-Zahra: Siege of Death and hunger, 2013, <http://www.alahednews.com.lb/essaydetails.php?eid=79453&cid=76>
 4. Nasim Online News, Syrian rebels are pounding two besieged Shia towns, 2013, <http://en.nasimonline.ir/archives/4383>
 5. Al-Manar, Armed Groups Launch Attack on Nubbol and Zahraa, 2013, <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?eid=100829&cid=23&fromval=1>
 6. Al-Manar, Photos for Bombing on Nubbul, 2013, <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=23&frid=23&eid=103706>
 7. Al-Manar, Nusra Front Murders 13 FSA Gunmen, 2013, <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?eid=101660&cid=23&fromval=1>

nearby town of Mayer, which is considered a central base for armed groups.

There has been many cases of kidnapping, a staggering number of 200+¹ people have been captured by the armed groups.

One very serious consequence of the siege is the poor medical condition; doctors reported increasing cases of cholera and mal nutrition in young adults and children and Leishmania. Because of the extreme deficient of medicine and medical supplies combined with poor sanitation the Leishmania disease became an epidemic².

5.1.2) Fuaa and Kafrya

Fuaa and Kafrya are two towns in the countryside of Idlib at about 4KM away from the city centre. Some 20,000 people - all Shia Muslims- inhabited the two towns, more people evaded their home towns as a result of being sectarian targeted and arrived at Fuaa and Kafrya; causing the population density of these two towns to rise.

1. The Documentation Center for Human Suffering, Report on Nubbul and Al-Zahra, 2013

2. Najmuddin, J., Worst massacre in History (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/ReTK2v>

Both Fuaa and Kafrya have been under continuous siege, the armed groups have surrounded the cities from all sides; although the Residential Defence Committees (comprising of members of the community defending their relatives and property) have tried to clear the main road linking their towns to the City of Idlib, but the armed groups have compromised the road time after time with their snipers and road side bombs.

Surviving on the crops of their farms, the people of Fuaa and Kafrya are being constantly targeted with a daily dose of rocket propellers and mortar shelling. Reportedly, more than 170 people have died, almost 70% of those are civilians and members of the Residential Defence Committees. Hundreds of people have been kidnapped and ransomed, the total amount of money paid in ransom during the first six months of the unrest is an alarming 38 millions Syrian Pounds. 80 people are still being held hostage until the time of righting this report^{1,2,3&1}.

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1. AltawthiqCenter, Continus Mortar Shelling of Fuaa and Kafrya (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/2hv2nI>
 2. Abdulrazak, M., Kafrya the story of Sectarian Persecution (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.almalaff.com/?p=834>
 3. AltawthiqCenter, Report on Fuaa and Kafrya (in Arabic), 2013, <http://goo.gl/OYLMDw>

5.2) Mass killing

One method used to mass kill Shia people are attacking them in places where they live and horrifically massacring them including women and children. There are clear signs of brutal ethnic cleansing².

5.2.1) Hatla village

One of the prominent examples is what happened in Hatlah, Deir Al-Zour governorate, in June 12th, 2013. It had been reported that at least 60 civilian Shia villagers were cold bloodedly massacred by armed groups. The armed groups used villagers from other sects in order to identify the Shia houses to attack them in their homes.

Hatlah village has a population of 20,000 among which 2,500 to 3,000 Shia Twelvers. On the morning of June 12th; villagers witnessed a gathering of armed groups on the outskirts of the village. At 5.45AM they started attacking the houses of Shia Muslims (pointed at by the pro-armed-groups villagers). Later, the armed groups stormed the Shia houses,

1. Islam Times, Hijacking a bus carrying women and children in the countryside of Idlib (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.islamtimes.org/vdcgny9xxak9w34.,rra.html>

2. Newman, A., Syrian Rebel Alliance Openly Threatens Ethnic Cleansing, 2013, <http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-news/asia/item/15527-syrian-rebel-alliance-openly-threatens-ethnic-cleansing>

barbarically killing every one inside and mutilating the body. After the massacre, the armed groups did not bury the bodies. Alternatively, they tied the bodies to cars and dragged the corpses. Some of the body were hanged on Shahele village main entrance. Moreover, the armed groups looted the Shia properties, including the houses, cars and small businesses. Later, they burned down what is left of the properties. Four houses and a Hussiniyah were bombed. Most of these horrible acts were videotaped and uploaded online.

Based on eyewitnesses' accounts, the killing included at least 2 children (Daughter of Ibraheem Mulla Eid, 7 Years old; and daughter of Mohammed Raja, 3 Years), an elderly (Eisa Khalaf Hilal, 90 years) and a pregnant woman (Batool Raja) whose unborn child was taken out and hacked into pieces. The few survivors fled the village into neighbouring Shahele where they are being harassed and threatened by death.

5.2.2) Houla village

According to eyewitness account, those killed in Houla on May 25th, 2012 belonged to families of Houla's Alawite and Shia minorities. Over 90% of the population of Houla are Sunni Muslims. Several dozen people of Houla were massacred.

Immediately following the massacre, the perpetrators supposedly filmed the victims only to present them as Sunni Muslims victims in videos posted online. It was, in the words of United Nations special envoy Kofi Annan, a “tipping point” in the Syrian conflict, a savage massacre of over 90 people predominantly women and children. For which the Syrian government forces were immediately blamed by virtually the entirety of western media¹.

5.2.3) The Khan Al-ASAL Massacre^{2&3}

90% of the people of Khan Al-Asal are follower to Shia and Alawites sects.

On 22/7/2013. There was a brigade of Syrian soldiers protecting the village. Terrorist groups from the Alnusra Front, Islamic state in Iraq and Al-Sham and supporter of Islamic Caliphate entered the city Syrian army.

1. Rosenthal, J., Rebels Responsible for Houla Massacre, 2012, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/302261/report-rebels-responsible-houla-massacre-john-rosenthal>

2. Abu-Nasr, D., 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-29/syrian-opposition-to-begin-investigation-into-killing-of-troops.html>

3. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Pillay urges investigation into alleged executions by anti-government armed groups in Syria's Khan Al-Assal, 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Media.aspx?IsMediaPage=true&LangID=E>

The preliminary data from what happen confirm the deaths of 350 people, 150 among them are Syrian soldiers and the rest are civilians.

More than 200 bodies including children, women and elderly were killed by sharp objects on sectarian basis. Report says they were slaughtered by cleavers, knives and spears of rifles. They decapitated many people and some houses were bombed while its inhabitant forced to stay inside it. Their barbaric way has not stopped there but extended to kill babies in their wombs by spearing pregnant women abdomen¹.

6) Forced displacement

Displacement in Syria has become a common pattern during the on-going war. With an estimate of more than 4.25 million people internally displaced² because of the fierce fighting. More often than not, the displaced people are moving away from areas with intense fighting but, unsurprisingly, settle down in areas with same faith or same sect. This form of displacement, alarming as it is, is

1. Al-Alam International News Channel, Khan Al-Assal Massacre (in Arabic), 2013, <http://www.alalam.ir/news/1502260>

2. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), SYRIA: A full-scale displacement and humanitarian crisis with no solutions in sight, 2012, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/syria>

the effect of the current war on the fabric of the Syrian community.

On the other hand, another form of targeted attacks has emerged. As it has become apparent (from the emerging movement of Mujahideen¹ and other Wahhabi Fatwa^{2&3}), the major intent of the Wahhabi terrorists is the removal of minorities in Syria, especially Shia Twelvers. Individuals have received letters of death threats, had their children kidnapped, had their private assets destroyed or seized and had been warned of systematic starvations unless they move out of their homes.

Numbers suggest that around 30% of the Shia Muslims in the troubled areas are displaced. Those are seeking refuge in well-known Shia towns such as Sayidah Zainab - Damascus.

As crowded by civilians as they have become, those towns have later been targeted and shelled⁴. The left

1. Russia Today, 2013, Pakistani Taliban sent hundreds to Syria to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with rebels, <http://rt.com/news/pakistan-taliban-rebel-syria-086/>

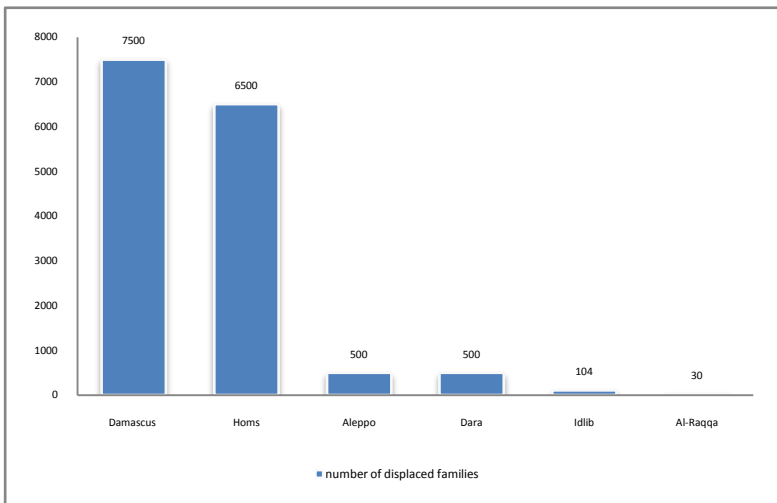
2. AhlulBayt News Agency, Salafi Fatwa permits FSA rebels to rape non-Sunni women in Syria, 2013, <http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=407189>

3. Ibrahim, R., New Fatwa Permits Rape of Non-Sunni Women in Syria, 2013, <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/new-fatwa-permits-rape-of-non-sunni-women-in-syria/>

4. Fisher, G., Bomb kills at least nine near Shiite shrine in Damascus, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/bomb-kills-at-least-nine-near-shiite-shrine-in-damascus/>

properties of the fled families have been re-possessed or destroyed by the terrorists. It is estimated that more than 75% of the fled families lost all their possessions, works and livelihoods.

Figure 4. Aggregated number of families displaced by province



7) Recommendations

7.1) Recommendation for the international organizations

- Compensate people for all the ransom they have already paid and more importantly pay financial compensations to the families of victims.

- Allowed all pro Shia media outlets, which are banned from Eutelsat and Intersat, to operate again particularly allow Al Alalm TV news channel, Press TV channel.

- Conduct a full investigation about the massacre done in Houla, Hatla and Khan Al Assal a hold the perpetrators accountable in front of International Criminal Court.

- Send the names of the members of armed groups who participate in mass killing to the International Criminal Court ICC and to the local authority.

- Initiate human rights training to the people in Syria and promote religion tolerance among all sects and faiths

- Inform International Medical Organizations (such as Doctors without Borders) about the endemic Leishmaniasis detected inside the Shia besieged towns in order to take the appropriate measures.

- International organizations, such as the Unicef, should take actions with regards of the children who lost their education for more than two years now in order to help them catch up with their peers.

- To add Syda Zienab shrine, the tomb of Syda Zienab contains the body of granddaughter of prophet

Mohammed (PBUH) and represent an iconic architecture monument, to the world heritage list of the Unesco.

7.2) Recommendation for The Arab League

- Hold the people who spread hatred speeches against Shia on the media outlets accountable for their deeds like Sheiks such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Adnan al-Aroor, Muhammad Hassan, Mohamed Yaacob, Muhammad Al-Arifi and Nabil Awadi.

- Allowed all pro Shia media outlets, which are banned from Arabsat and Nilesat, to operate again particularly allow Alalmtv news channel, Press Tv channel.

- Recognise shia as an official faith all around Arab states and stop undermining shia faith and religion in the Arab media outlets.

7.3) Recommendation for Syrian governments

- Protect Shia community in Syria witch represent in the optimistic statistics about 1%-1.4% of the whole population.

- Protect religious scholars from armed groups by providing them with bodyguard.

- Protect Shia shrine and worship places by government troops.

- Breaking the sieged villages (Nobbol and alzahra) and liberate people.

7.4) Recommendation for Shia communities in Syria

- Rebuild the destroyed mosque and shrines.
- Protect religious scholars from armed groups by providing them with bodyguard.

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Shia Muslim Genocide

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

Hassnain Naqvi



Abstract

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.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman philosopher, orator, lawyer, and politician, once stated that "the soul, mind, and meaning of a State lie in its Laws".

It has been suggested that 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. First though the nature of the violence, as well as other contributory factors, must be dealt with for contextual necessity.

Violence in Pakistan

The Shia Muslim population in Pakistan is in the minority (at around 15%-20% of the population), with Sunni Muslim constituting the majority.¹ There are, however, further sub-sects of Islam within each group.

1. S Afzal, H Iqbal & M Inayat 'Sectarianism and Its Implications for Pakistan Security: Policy Recommendations Using Exploratory Study' (2012) [4] *JHSS* 19, 19; Ahmar, M 'Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan' (2006) [9] *Pakistan Vision* 1, 2.

While violence amongst diverse populations may be common, there was intensification of sectarian violence in Pakistan in particularly from the late 1970s and the early 1980s.¹ It should be noted that violent clashes have affected the Shia and Sunni populations.² Between 2007-2011 there were reportedly 631 incidences of sectarian violence that led to the death of over 1649 people.³ However, the violence against the Shia is a particularly pronounced. Estimates suggest that the total number of Shia targeted and killed in Pakistan numbers over 21 000.⁴ This figure must then be contextualised within the minority percentage of the population that the Shia people represent.

Socio-historical influences

It must be noted, even in brief, that there are socio-historical factors which have contributed strongly to the forms of violence currently seen in Pakistan. General Zia ul Haq (governing between 1977-1988) began a program of legalised penalties against minorities, politically

1. Afzal et al (n1) 19.

2. H Yusuf *Sectarian violence: Pakistan's greatest security threat?* (Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2012) 1.

3. Ibid 3.

4. See further Karachi report *Shia Target Killing Report* (MWM Pakistan 2012).

entrenching extremist views. During his process of Islamisation of Pakistan, sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia, which had previously been erratic, became organised.¹ His imposition of Sharia law alienated the Shia who believed they should be permitted to follow their own *Fiqa*.² Subsequent leadership has been strongly militarised too,³ this militarisation has often seen support of extremist fringe groups, with the state extending support directly to the Taliban⁴.

External political forces have had a strong influence as well. Militancy stems from a British colonial legacy in Pakistan.⁵ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan meant that the United States exploited sectarian divisions in Pakistan in its fighting of a proxy war against Communism that required support on the border in the late 1970s and early 1980s⁶. This interference continued even after the Afghan war as a consequence of 9/11 – Pakistan joined as a “partner against terror”, while at the same time trying to

1. Afzal et al (n 1) 20; Ahmar (n 1) 1.

2. Afzal et al (n 1) 22.

3. J Wynbrandt *A Brief History of Pakistan* (MP Hermitage, 2009) 275.

4. *Ibid* 259.

5. C Candland ‘Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan’, in: Charles Kennedy and Cynthia Botterin (eds), *Pakistan 2005*, (Oxford University Press 2006) 20.

6. Afzal (n 1) 22.

manage increasing Talibanisation within its own borders.¹ In 2006 Taliban fighters sought refuge in the North-West of Pakistan, exploiting Sunni-Shia divisions as a means of securing routes into Afghanistan.²

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.³ 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.⁴

Role of government and background

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. Therefore it is vital to provide the background in the making of Pakistan.

There has been a prodigious discussion and great deliberation about Jinnah's impetuses behind his drive for

1. Ibid; Yusuf (n 3) 2.

2. Yusuf (n 3) 4.

3. Ahmar (n 1) 8.

4. Ibid 10.

an independent Muslim Pakistan¹. The foremost element had been his rising disillusionment with Congress, which he increasingly viewed as representing the interests of the Hindu majority. Jinnah became resolutely convinced that partition of British India was the only way to protect Muslim political, democratic, constitutional, cultural, and economic rights and to preserve Muslim identity. In his efforts to uphold his idea of an independent Muslim State, Jinnah was opposed by extremist Muslim religious parties and groups namely Majlis Ahrar, Deobandis as well as the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami and other religious -oriented groups.

They were the supporters of Congress's notion of undivided and united India. Jinnah's support comprised of professionals, administrators, business elites, and landlords. In his address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, Jinnah clearly called for the establishment of a State that gave full rights to all citizens irrespective of their religious affiliations. He stated:

1. Jinnah has been the subject of many studies. See for example, Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984); Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (London: Routledge, 1997).

“You may belong to any religion or caste or creed... in the course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is a personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense, as citizens of the state”¹.

Jinnah’s vision, image, and dream of Pakistan as a forbearing tolerant, modern, Islamic democratic State was later appropriated and hijacked by religious rudimentary groups who found in the new State an opportunities to advance their causes along conservative religious lines. From within and outside the State, religion was thus being used as a tool in advancing the political motives of religious parties and groups. The constitutional debate, the role of religious minorities, Islamisation, and Sharia were some of the examples that explained such trends and tendencies, which partly contributed toward the rise of religious extremism.

Under Military Rule:

The move toward altering and converting Pakistan into an extreme orthodox Islamic State intensified during the control of General Muhammad Zia ul-Huq (1977-88), who

1. Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 12-3.

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. Under Zia, a close alliance emerged between the military and extreme orthodox Sunnis.¹

Consequently, Zia introduced controversial Islamic legislation such as Hadood (Islamic codes), and other measures that included Zakat (compulsory alms-giving), Usher (agricultural tax), Islamic banking, and blasphemy laws through a handpicked and non-party undemocratically “elected” Majlis-e-Shura (Parliament) which gave indemnity to his actions that were illegal according to the 1973 Constitution.²

Islamists were appointed to important government positions in the judiciary, civil services, and educational institutions. Sharia courts were established to try cases under Islamic law, while Islamisation was promoted through the government supported media.³

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1. an excellent study on the creation of Pakistan by Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2004).
 2. Richard Kurin, “Islamisation in Pakistan: a view from the countryside,” *Asian Survey* 25, no.8 (August 1985): 852-62.
 3. Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 132

In addition, education was Islamised under Zia. There occurred a mushroom growth of Madaris (Islamic seminaries) with Government support, and funds being channelled from Arabia and other Islamic sources and, ironically, from some western countries. For instance, in 1971 there were only 900 Madaris in Pakistan but by the end of the Zia era, there were as many as 8,000 registered and as many as 25,000 unregistered Madaris of the Sunni branch of Islam.¹ It is important to note here that although the common Sunni masses excuse themselves of being associated with the extremist ideology and label the extreme elements as salafi or Wahhabi, and most dispute that Wahhabis are Sunni. The terms Wahhabi, Salafi and ahl al-hadith (people of hadith) are often used interchangeably, but Wahhabism has also been called "a particular orientation within Salafism"² adherents to this tradition do not use these terms themselves. Associates of this form of Islam call themselves *Ahlul Sunna wal Jama'a* and declare that they are the mainstream Sunni and adherents of the religious school of jurisprudence of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal which happens to be one of the four schools of Jurisprudence within the Sunnis branch of

1. Rashid, Taliban: Military Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, 89.

2. GlobalSecurity.org. 2005-04-27. Archived from the original Retrieved 2013-07-11.

Islam. Therefore, within the majority of the Madaris the general presumption is that they remain on the Sunni path, and the Sunni extremists who have orchestrated the killings of Shia Muslims are living and studying in madrassas or religious schools belonging to these movements but no police or military action has been taken against them.

Shias, who make up an estimated 20 percent of Pakistan's 180 million people, have been persecuted off and on since the 1980s, when anti-Shia groups began to be backed by the army and funded by Saudi Arabia to prevent the growing influence of Iran in the years after the Iranian revolution. At that time, there were attacks against individual Shias, though not the large-scale bombings of whole communities that have taken place recently.

But under the rule of General Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988), Pakistan greatly expanded its blasphemy laws— which dated from the partition of India in 1947—to make them into a powerful tool to use against religious minorities.

Evidence demonstrates that it is institutions, and not attitudes of individuals, which appear to be fuelling most forms of religious violence in Pakistan.¹ There has been a

1. Fair, C; Malhotra, N & Shapiro, J *The Roots of Militancy: Explaining support for political violence in Pakistan* (Princeton 2009) 28.

strong perception in academia that clerics have incited sectarian violence targeting Shia, as well as militant organisations, have operated freely in parts of Pakistan.¹ These militant movements provide politicians with an electoral base and support, which encourages them to “turn a blind eye”.² The direct involvement of government in either actively, or at least tacitly, supporting these militants is demonstrated in the fact that government officials and the institutions themselves have been subject to attacks in response to perceived sectarian identities or involvement with sectarian cases.³ This necessarily requires the State to bring a complete halt to the use of *zakat* or other sources of government funding to finance public activities of a particular sect due to the perception of bias this creates.⁴

The intelligence agencies in particular need to be made more accountable within Pakistan in relation to the violence.⁵ Militant organisations have historically enjoyed direct financial support from the Pakistani security establishment to assist Pakistani forces in conflict with

1. Azfal et al (n 1) 20.

2. Yusuf (n 3) 7.

3. Afzal (n 1) 23.

4. Ahmar (n 1) 15.

5. Ibid 24.

India.¹ The close links between intelligence agencies and the perpetrators of Shia violence is constantly under media scrutiny.

Many have called for the Pakistani government to reform the *madrassa*, as perceived hotbeds for breeding sectarian sentiment.² Whereas traditional Pakistani *madaris* were directed at preserving Islamic knowledge, they have become avenues now for political mobilisation, sometimes violent.³

However, the *madrassa* have gained influence in a response to another state failing: an educational vacuum.⁴ *Madaris* perform many basic functions (such as care giving and food provision) that should be the realm of local government; and it is this that contributes to their capacity to wield political influence amongst its attendees.⁵

This brings us to a direct contributory failing of the government: the national school curriculum has been identified as fuelling religious prejudice.⁶ Even where not

1. Yusuf (n 3) 6.

2. Ibid 1.

3. Candland (n 12) 1.

4. Ibid 2.

5. Ibid 3.

6. Yusuf (n 3) 2; Ahmar (n 1) 14.

directly negative of a particular sect or sub- sect, the general incorporation of intolerant attitudes toward religious differences is having a marked affect on political attitudes that support violence.¹ Instead, the national curriculum should be focused on peace education.²

However, there have been indications that government has tried to crackdown on militancy since 2001.³

Regardless, the state should be reforming its conduct so that the state apparatus is seen to be, and acts in fact as, neutral in dealing with sectarian and inter-religious differences.⁴

Constitutional factors

The question then turns to whether or not it is lacunas in the constitutional structure that are at 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.⁵

As a fundamental principle within it, the equality

1. See results of Fair et al (n 19) 27.

2. Candland (n 12) 3.

3. Ahmar (n 1) 5.

4. Ibid 14.

5. Wynbrandt (n 10) 275.

provision calls expressly for the equality of all citizens.¹ While sub-articles may phrase it within a gender paradigm, it would clearly support equal treatment on the basis of religion – and directly support interventions like the halting of *zakat* and financial support for particular religious sects. It appears then that the problem does not lie in the drafting of the equality provision, but rather the government's inability to interpret these provisions within the full spirit of the Constitution and disallow discrimination on the basis of colour, race or creed.²

Government should reaffirm the centrality of this constitutional principle, within the context of religion in particular, through its actions.³

This appears too in relation to the interpretation on the right to profess religion.⁴ This right necessarily comes, on reasonable meaning, with a concomitant duty to respect the religion of others.⁵ The violation of this constitutional principle has been blatantly demonstrated through open calls to have Shi'ite declared as non-Muslims.⁶ Action

1. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, art 25.

2. Afzal et al (n 1) 24.

3. Ahmar (n 1) 15.

4. Constitution (n 40) art 20.

5. Afzal et al (n 1) 24.

6. Ahmar (n 1) 4.

should be taken in terms of this provision if such incidences occur.

The article relating to freedom of speech is of note as well:

“Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression... subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part there of... public order, decency or morality...or incitement to an offence”.¹

While the state could perceivably include an express sub-article that precludes hate speech, an ordinary reading of the exclusion relating to “incitement to an offence” would surely include incitements to violent acts based on race. The dissemination of hate speech is a significant problem in Pakistan: extremist military groups such as the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat and Lashkar-e-Jhagvi and its brother organisation Sipah-e-Shabah are technically outlawed,² but remain operational and known – directly responsible for spreading anti-Shia sentiment and

1. Constitution (n 40) art 19.

2. See further Ibid art 256.

perpetrating violence.¹ The *jihadi* media is also gaining momentum with a broad espousing of *jihadi* beliefs of violence.² The Pakistani social context indicates that it would be best if the constitutional right under this article directly addressed the issue of hate speech that fuels sectarian violence with a concomitant criminal sanction.³ This would extend to forms of media, requiring ‘responsible reporting’ in terms of Shia violence.⁴

Thus it appears it is not the Constitution itself, but rather the interpretation of the Constitution and its implementation that are problematic. Adaptions in drafting should address the particular Pakistani context, but these interventions alone will not be adequate to protect the Shia population.

Criminal justice system

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

1. Yusuf (n 3) 3.

2. Ahmar (n 1) 4, 14.

3. Ibid 14.

4. Ibid 14.

rates.¹ Many link these failings to the

politicisation of the police force (amongst other contributing factors).²

There is also the issue of privately run Sharia courts in the North West Frontier Province.³ Not only do these, through their locality, mean the rights of minorities will not receive consideration, it also serves to undermine the national judicial system – contributing to its weakening.⁴

The Supreme Court has also failed directly in terms of the prosecution of individuals. In July 2011 the Supreme Court failed to find evidence against Laskar-e-Jhangvi leader Maliq Ishaq in relation to the murders of Shia – and, since his release, he has gone on to publically espouse anti-Shia sentiments.⁵

Though he was subsequently arrested and held in February 2013, he was later released in June 2013.⁶

Blasphemy laws in particular, though in some sense

1. Yusuf (n 3) 6.

2. Yusuf (n 3) 7.

3. Ahmar (n 1) 15.

4. Ibid 15.

5. Yusuf (n 3) 7.

6. Press Trust of India Pakistan Supreme Court orders Nawaz Sharif government to initiate treason case against Pervez Musharraf <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/pakistan-supreme-court-orders-nawaz-sharif-government-to-initiate-treason-case-against-pervez-mushar-387531> accessed 5 July 2013.

supported by certain provisions of the Constitution,¹ have been used as a mechanism for the Pakistani government to target minority groups that attempt to assert their religious freedoms.² Contained in a variety of criminal code, these laws should be repealed.³

The positive obligation to prevent genocide

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*.⁴ 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.⁵ 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

1. Constitution (n 40) art 19.

2. Yusuf (n 3) 2.

3. Ahmar (n 1) 15.

4. *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v Serbia and Montenegro)* (Judgment) ICJ Reports 2007, 43.

5. *Ibid* para 430.

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.¹

Actions that would constitute prevention need not only be legislative; however, the content of what actions would be required remain shaky.² This is of relevance in the Pakistani context, given the inefficacy of government only being partially connected to legislative failings.

If the state is unable to cope with its Article 1³ obligation, then it becomes the responsibility of the international community to try and interfere through mechanisms such as through the United Nations.⁴

In this regard, the All Parliamentary Human Rights group of the British Parliament in June 2013 has made a submission to the United Nations stating that the targeted killings of Shia Muslims in Pakistan should be considered

1. Ibid.

2. A Gattini 'Breach of the Obligation to Prevent and Reparation Thereof in the ICJ's Genocide Judgment' (2007) [18] *EJIL* 695, 704.

3. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (adopted 9 December 1948, entered into force 12 January 1951) 1021 UNTS 78.

4. Ibid 698.

genocide.¹ As Lord Averbury stated:

“This is not a case of one or two individuals being killed but a systematic countrywide pogrom against the whole of the Shia population of Pakistan which has so far taken the lives of over 21,000 people by banned organizations, which nevertheless operate with almost total impunity”.²

The United Nations Convention defines genocide as the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part...a...religious group”³ and, as supported by the All Parliamentary Human Rights Group, the indications are strong that this is the case in Pakistan given the minority numbers. That the Pakistani government is not doing all it can to prevent this genocide is clear; what will be more difficult to determine is whether the few steps it has taken have been enough to rid them of their responsibilities under Article 2.

1. S Khan *British Parliament's Human Rights Group approaches the UN to stop # Shia Genocide in Pakistan*

<http://criticalppp.com/archives/267467> accessed 5 July 2013.

2. <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-181249-UN-approached-over-targeted-killings-of-Pakistani-Shias>

3. Constitution (n 40) art 2.

Conclusion

The politics of militancy has been identified as the best intervention point for halting Shia violence in Pakistan.¹ It is government action that is directly being implicated as the core failing; with the constitutional and legislative paradigm seemingly only contributing insofar as the government is failing to observe its spirit, implementation and execution. Drafting should create more direct and express obligations on the state to prevent sectarian violence, given this continued failure. For the security of all Pakistanis, interventions must occur at state level, and the Constitution obliges the state to preserve the security of its citizens.² The state is obliged to prevent genocide, but problematically this first requires genocide to be established (seemingly in contradiction to the ordinary meaning of ‘prevent’) (see *Bosnia v. Serbia*).³ Most commentators recognize that the genocide is one in which genocidal intent aligns with the motive of hatred of the targeted groups.⁴ In this context it can be shown from a

1. Fair et al (n 19) 30.

2. Constitution (n 40) art 9.

3. *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (n 61) 430.

4. Cayley, *supra* note 39, at 837 (quoting W. SCHABAS, GENOCIDE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE CRIME OF CRIMES 255 (2000))

legal stance that the perpetrators intent to destroy a protected group within the meaning of the articles framework is established, and international action should be taken against the actors of such crime. While the All Parliamentary Human Rights Group will hopefully be of assistance in this regard, another point of intervention is to encourage the state to enact its own constitutional principles in preservation of its people's security and repeal the blasphemy laws that provide a patent mechanism for discrimination. The problem of course in suggesting national interventions is that the historical failings of the state indicate against the efficacy of the approach.

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Sectarian Intolerance and Discrimination in Bahrain

Sheikh Maytham Al Salman



Introduction

Since the 14th of February, 2011 the government of Bahrain has extensively practiced sectarian seclusion and sectarian blaspheme. These practices add on to its long lasting sectarian discrimination practices that have denied the majority of Bahrainis their rights based on their religious, ethnic and sectarian background. Sectarian Framing in Bahrain is a deliberate regime strategy rather than being a secretion of social tensions. The protests on the 14th of February were the result of broken promises by

the regime to transform Bahrain to become a Constitutional Democratic Monarchy where by the people are the source of all legitimacies. The failure to transform Bahrain into a Democratic civil state during the ten years after the Referendum on the National Action Charter of Bahrain on the 14th of February 2001 that ended the popular 1990s Uprising and enabled Bahrain to return to constitutional rule after an absence of the constitution of 26 years has upsurged national frustration. The frustration has accumulated in a short time span due to the failure to stop human rights violations, create ground for fair representation of all Bahrainis, and the failure to proceed toward a true democratic state. The marches on the 14th of February 2011 explicitly rejected sectarianism and sought to emphasize instead calls for democratic reform and national unity. Although the majority of protestors were Shia, like the population of Bahrain itself, they insisted firmly that they represented both sects emphasizing that they are part of the Arab uprisings seen from Tunisia and Egypt. The vast majority of their slogans were calling for democracy, human rights, and fair representation of all Bahraini's regardless of race, sect, or ideology.

The Bahraini government has not only responded with a violent brutal crackdown but they have also encouraged

sectarianism through igniting social distrust, suspicion and hatred amongst Bahrainis. This strategy was aimed at fragmenting the democratic movement and building domestic and international alignments that would legitimize the violent crackdown on democratic reformers.

Anti-Shi'ism

Anti-Shi'ism has spread throughout Bahrain in a limited time span due to the utilization of official media and governmentally financed media to broadcast the culture of sectarian intolerance, noting that Bahrain only has one independent newspaper.

The campaign of framing Bahraini Shias has also spread to the neighboring gulf media who participated with the official media in Bahrain in framing Shia's as:

1- Infidels

2- Traitors

3- Safawi's

4- Unpatriotic, and other degrading disesteemed social frames.

This campaign has unfortunately led to anchor a culture of Religious Intolerance amongst some Bahrainis

The sectarian framing strategy encouraged by the government of Bahrain has resulted in systematic

Violations of human rights that led to killings, imprisonment, job suspensions, etc. During the 27 months after the crackdown, reliable domestic and international reports including USCIRF annual report have confirmed that the government of Bahrain practices systematic sectarianism.

The Culture of Religious intolerance

Religious intolerance exists in environments whereby a group (a society, religious group, non-religious group, political group) refuses to tolerate practices, persons or beliefs of another group based on religious grounds rather than social or political grounds

Although The United Nations upholds the right to free expression of religious belief in articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and forbids discrimination on the basis of religion in article 2, the government of Bahrain has continuously violated article 2, 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . The Government has succeeded tremendously in fragmenting the society and igniting hatred between both sects in order to delay democracy in Bahrain as much as possible. The culture of Religious intolerance has also enabled the regime to socially legitimize Religious

discrimination within certain social circles. As a result, many Hardliners today do not see a problem in valuing or treating fellow Bahraini's differently because of the sect they belong to.

The culture of Religious Intolerance has also been instrumented to legitimize Religious Persecution where by Bahrainis have been imprisoned, tortured and killed for on the basis of their religious identity

Furthermore, this Culture has created a suitable platform for the growth of Extremism. The images of al-Qaeda flags been lifted by pro governmental Extremists in different public locations since February 14th 2011. This is a clear indicator that local extremist groups have strengthened themselves and reinforced their positions within the Government and within social networks. The culture of Religious Intolerance encouraged by the Government has evidentially aided in turning Bahrain into an ideal environment for Extremism. The Government has nationalized thousands of mercenaries from countries where Extremism has a strong hold like Pakistan, Yemen and Syria. Many social analyst strongly argue that this has indirectly led to the infusion of Extremism within the country.

The culture of Religious Intolerance has also motivated more than 70 pro government hard-line clerics to oppose the

construction of churches in Bahrain complex claiming that it was forbidden to build churches in the Arabian Peninsula noting that this is a clear contradiction to the history of openness, tolerance, and acceptance of religious and cultural plurality in Bahrain. Its a pity to see Bahrain head in this direction after it has been long regarded as the best Gulf model of coexistence and respect between different religions and sects. Bahrain was always distinguished model of respect between mosques and churches.

I would like to take this opportunity to call for reinforcing the importance of seeing the "Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence" implemented all over the world including Bahrain. The Government of Bahrain has systematically practiced discrimination against its own people on the basis of their ethnicity, religion or sect instead of promoting intercultural understanding and social peace. It is the responsibility of the Government to build a culture of peace and to put an end to impunity, systematic human rights violations and ongoing sectarian discrimination. Unfortunately the government has utilized official media to ignite sectarian hatred instead of prohibiting the incitement of sectarian hatred. This is

clearly regarded as a violation to The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that states that "any advocacy of racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law". It is also a clear violation to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) that prohibits all incitement of racism.

Therefore, I believe it is time for the international community to exert more pressure on Bahrain to promote a culture of religious neutrality in the field of civil and political rights. International Bodies should also monitor Bahrain more closely to create full awareness of discriminatory acts committed by the Government. We are looking forward to end all forms of human rights violations which are driven by race, ethnicity, religion or sect, however the time needed to achieve this goal will be greatly shortened if the international community including the human rights council exert more pressure on Bahrain to respect International Human Rights Laws.

Repeated attacks Mosques

The International Covenant of Political and Civil Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in article

18 clearly guarantee freedom of belief and religion by stating the following: Everyone shall have freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes the freedom to have to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom to worship, either individually or in community with others in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Mosques and places of worship regardless of religion should enjoy the same protection rights associated with universal religious freedom rights, since rituals and worship practices naturally occur in mosques and places of worship, thus, identical religious freedom protection rights apply to places of worship.

It is also obvious that mosques are regarded as divine locations to worshipers; making any physical attack on them a clear attack on their beliefs, and an violation to their universal religious freedom rights

The first section of the seventh chapter in the report published by Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry(BICI), chaired by Professor Mahmood Sharif Bassiouni has clearly highlighted in paragraphs ‘1306 – 1336’ that the Government of Bahrain has attacked a large number of places of worship that belong to Shia Muslim

sect. (the ruling family does not belong to this sect.), the attacks were varied between complete demolishing or vandalism, and all the attacks took place during the national safety law(15th March – 30th May, 2011)

The BICI report clearly concluded that the mosque demolition practice was ordered by the Government of Bahrain and involved the participation of forces from the army and the police.

The BICI report was released in November 2011 and has confirmed that the mosque demolition genocide committed by the Government of Bahrain is a clear violation of international laws and commitments of the Government.

However until today, the attacks on Shia Mosques and places of worship by the Government of Bahrain have not stopped. Below are clear indicators on the continuity of attacks on Shia Mosques and Places of Worship

- The Religious Freedom Unit at the Bahrain Human Rights Observatory has reported 49 attacks on Shia Mosques and Places of Worship in the period between June 2012-August 2013

- No initiative has been taken to rebuild 38 Shia Mosques demolished by the the regime except for 5 mosques

- The government has transferred the Historical Abu Thar Mosque into a public park on the 8th of May, 2013. Such measures are regarded as collective punishment against the Shia sect and attempt to provoke sectarian hatred.

- Some of the shia mosques in Bahrain were relocated to secluded locations for sectarian reasons. Al-Barbaghi mosque in A'ali area, Fadak Al-Zahara'a mosque, Abu Talib Mosque, Al-Imam Al-Hassan Mosque in Hamad Town have been relocated following the announcements of the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and endowments on 20th November,2012 and 2nd December,2013. These announcements clarify that the Government of Bahrain refuses to have mosques of Shia Muslims on main locations, on public roads or in main cities.

- None of the officials, who are responsible for the Mosque Demolition Genocide have been held accountable despite the fact that there is a criminal complaint approved by the prosecution since 18 months but no measures have been taken yet regarding this issue.

- Two demolished mosques have been attacked by live ammunition and vandalized, the mosques are: Al-Imam Al-Sadiq Mosque in Salmabad area and Imam Al-Baqer in Nuwaidrat area on the 18th July, 2013.

- The shrine of Sa'asa'h bin Sawhan, have been continuously attacked, noting the shrine carries a divine value for the Shia sect. The last time the place was attacked was on 17th March 2012 although this is mosque is close to military areas and individuals are prohibited from approaching these areas.

- The shrine of (Sheikh Maytham Al-Bahrani) has been attacked on the 29th of June, 2013. It is a shrine of a prominent scholar and is highly respected by Bahrainis and by Shia Muslims around the world. The Shrine is 700 years old

It is clear to international observers that attacks on Shia Mosques and worship places pass suspiciously with no comments from the official authorities. No official condemnation, no conviction, nor any measures that reflect any kind of disagreement with such incidents against the Shia community.

All of the above collectively indicates an apartheid doctrine adopted by the Authority, in which all holy Shia houses of worship are under attack, and there are no protection rights for these places. Thus, the authority vindictively attacks them, and provokes feelings by turning them into gardens or military sites.

Therefore, due to the abandonment of its role as a state in protecting religious shrines, inciting events in the assaults on Shia community, and providing impunity to the attackers, we, thereby, call the international community, and the human conscience to stand with the people of Bahrain, to support their legitimate demands to achieve protection for their holy places and worship shrines.

Below is a list of Shia Mosques and Places of Worship which have been demolished and vandalised between 15 March 2011-15 May 2011

NO.	Worship houses	Classification	Bloc	Area	Date of violation	Damages	Legal status	Correspondence	Current situation
1	Emam Mohammad Al Baqer	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Old building	Ministry of Justice	
2	Abo Thar Al Ghafari	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
3	Shaikh Yousef	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence	Ministry of Justice	
4	Emam Al Hadi	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Location map	Ministry of Justice	
5	Emam Al Sadiq	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
6	Salman Al Farsi	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
7	Emam Al Hasan	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Location map	Ministry of Justice	
8	Moa'amen	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence	Ministry of Justice	
9	Emam Al Jawad	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
10	Daweera	Mosque	646	Nawaidrat	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Old building	Ministry of Justice	
11	Emam Ali	Mosque		Zayed Town	20/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
12	Al Zahra'a	Mosque	720	Zayed Town	20/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
13	Al Rasool Al Aadam	Mosque	1026	Karzakkan	14/4/2011	Completely demolished	An official statement	Ministry of	
14	Watyah	Mosque	509	Maqaba	11/5/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence	Ministry of Justice	
15	Fadak Al Zahra'a	Mosque	1204	Hamad	28/4/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence		
16	Abo Taleb	Mosque	1213	Hamad	18/4/2011	Completely demolished	Building Permit	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
17	Om Al Baneen	Mosque	1211	Hamad	28/4/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
18	Salman Al Mohamadi	Mosque	1214	Hamad	15/4/2011	Completely demolished	Building Permit	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
19	Sayeda Zainab	Mosque	1209	Hamad	15/4/2011	Completely demolished & burnt	Building Permit & Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
20	Emam Ali	Mosque	1038	Hamad	11/5/2011	Completely demolished	Official correspondence	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
21	Shaikh Mohammed Al Braighi	Mosque	744	Aali	17/4/2011	Completely demolished	Building Permit	Ministry of	
22	Ain Rastan	Mosque	R: Sh Zayed	Aali	19/4/2011	Completely demolished	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
23	Emam Hasan Al Askari	Mosque	1216	Hamad	15/4/2011	Completely demolished	Building Permit ,Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	AlWasat: To begin construction
24	Watyah	Mosque	327	Mahooz	10/4/2011	Completely demolished	Building Permit	Ministry of	
25	Alawyen (Shaikh Ibrahim)	Mosque	R: Sh	Manama	21/4/2011	Completely demolished	An existing building	Ministry of	
26	Marawhna	Mosque	308	Zinj		Completely demolished	Building Permit		
27	Guwaikebat	Mosque	709	Kawara	25/3/2011	Completely burnt	Private property	Ministry of Justice	
28	Shaikh Abed	Mosque	609	Sitra/Sfala	15/4/2011	Completely demolished	Private property	Ministry of Justice	
29	Emam Al Jawad	Mosque	1209	Hamad		Completely demolished	Official correspondence		
30	Emam Al Sajjad	Mosque	1018	Lawzee		Completely demolished	Official correspondence		
31	Emam Al Baqeea	Mosque	1018	Lawzee		Completely demolished	Official correspondence		
32	Emam Al Hasan	Mosque	1651	Salmabad		Completely demolished			
33	Emam Al Sadiq	Mosque	706	Salmabad		Completely demolished			
34	Mazar Al Emam	Mosque	1048	Darklib		Completely demolished			
35	Shaikh Maytham	Mosque	337	Juffair	19/3/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Site Plan		
36	Al Zahra'a	Mosque	212	Muharraq	19/3/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Site Plan		
37	Shaikh Mohammed Al wasati	Mosque	609	Sitra/Sfala	15/4/2011	Partial destruction	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
38	Shaikh Yaqoob	Mosque	314	Na'aem	19/3/2011	Partial destruction	Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
39	Shaikh Saasa'a Sohan	Mosque	950	Askar	15/3/2011	Partial destruction	Restoration permission	Ministry of Justice	
40	Emam Al Sadiq	Mosque	542	Duraz	13/5/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Location map	Ministry of Justice	
41	Anwar	Mosque	414	Al Daih	18/4/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Site Plan		
42	Kareem Ahl Al Bait	Mosque	1207	Hamad		Partial destruction			
43	Saboor	Mosque	359	Zinj		Partial destruction			
44	Emam Al Baqer (for men)	Matam	756	Bori	6/4/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Site Plan	Ministry of Justice	
45	Awlad Abd Al Hai (for men)	Matam	406	Sanabis		Partial destruction	Building Permit & Site Plan		
46	Isa Town (for women)	Matam	806	Isa Town	20/4/2011	Partial destruction	An existing building	Ministry of Justice	
47	Al Sada (for men)	Matam	602	Sitra/ Mhaza	16/4/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Location map	Ministry of Justice	
48	Shaha Al Shamali (for women)	Matam	314	Na'aem	19/3/2011	Partial destruction	Document	Ministry of Justice	
49	Na'aem Al Gharbi (for men)	Matam	314	Na'aem	19/3/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Document	Ministry of Justice	
50	Al Qasab (for men)	Matam	301	Manama	3/3/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Document	Ministry of Justice	
51	Haj Hasan Oraibi (for men)	Matam	709	Kawara	20/4/2011	Partial destruction	Building Permit & Document	Ministry of Justice	
52	Emam Al Hadi (for men)	Mosque & Matam	1213	Hamad		Completely demolished	Document		AlWasat: To begin construction
53	Muharraq	Cemetery	223	Muharraq	19/3/2011	Partial destruction			
54	Bani Jamra	Cemetery	R: Budaiya	Bani Jamra	2/4/2011	Partial destruction	Site Plan		



Organization for Defending
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