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Written statement* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, , non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

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

[30 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Racism Islamophobia

Islamophobia not only violates Muslims' human rights, but feeds hatred and racism round the world. We express serious regret over the increasing cases of Islamophobia round the world and the findings of the studies (1) which has recorded ten countries including France, India, United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Germany, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sri Lanka, Netherlands, and Australia as the States that need to pay particular attention to growing hatred against Muslims which is manifested in various forms.

Equally regrettable is the reality that France, India, United Kingdom, United States, Canada are considered as the "hotspots" of Islamophobia where "Islamophobic policies and actions are prevalent".

The United Kingdom

Muslims residing in the United Kingdom have experienced a rising trend of Islamophobia within the past five years (2), with Muslim women suffering the triple discrimination because of gender, ethnic minority origin and religious beliefs. They face "discrimination in law and practice" including "verbal and physical attacks" and "online hatred".

The United States

The United State has always recorded high rates of Islamophobic incidents. The FBI statistics has revealed that hate crimes against Muslims in the United States skyrocketed immediately after September 11, 2001, and continued an upward trend since then (3) . The stereotypes which were formed by the media following the 9/11 attacks and was strengthened by the rise of DAESH, have exposed Muslims to a range of discriminations, exclusion and marginalization, including verbal harassment, hate speech, violent attacks and religious profiling.

A Pew Research Center 2021 report found that 2 decades after the 9/11 attacks, Republicans had increasingly come to view Islam as more likely than other religions to encourage violence among believers (4) . The findings prove a highly regrettable stigmatization of Muslims in the country.

France

In France Muslim hatred sentiments are reported to have been on a sharp rise since 2 Sep. 2020, when the French magazine Charlie Hebdo republished insulting cartoons of Prophet Mohammed. Similar publishing by the Magazine in 2015, lead to attacks to Charlie Hebdo office, killing 11 members of the staff.

Muslims in France suffer from systemic discrimination in job applications, schools and public places, where national laws ban any manifestations of religious beliefs, including Muslim headscarves. Muslims are also subject to hate crimes and verbal harassment because of their religion. Muslim women endure inequalities and discrimination in the workplace, with little opportunities of enjoying high-ranking and stable job positions, pushing them in the margins of poverty and vulnerability.

Recently, the French Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, went as far as using terms like "Sunni Muslim terrorism" during his visit to New York, on May 3, 2023. He directly targeted Islam as a religion and the majority Sunni doctrine followed by French Muslims. This rhetoric is characterized by extreme violence and has a significant public impact, further isolating Muslims from the public sphere and sending a message to non-Muslims that the harassment of French Muslims holds little significance for political leaders.

Canada

The Canadian government has been showing friendly gestures towards Islam in the past years, however, there are reports of hate crimes⁽⁵⁾ against Muslims in Canada and studies⁽⁶⁾ have found Islamophobic views prevalent across the country with highest rates in Quebec. Another study⁽⁷⁾ found Islamophobia to be deeply rooted in Canada and on the rise, with Black Muslim women wearing hijabs as particular targets. The findings of the study manifested anti-Muslim incidents to be more violent, than the ones committed against the followers of other religions.

India

In India, discrimination against Muslims has been on the rise within the past three years with a sharper increase in the past year, following the State's efforts to promote an ultranationalist Hindu ideology. The policy decisions are reported to have turned the country into a dangerous region for Muslim minorities, making them victims of religious based hatred and violence including "far-right campaigns"; "discrimination"; "verbal & physical assault"; "hate speech"; "online hate"; "hijab incidents"; "mosque incidents" and "policy related" discrimination.

The current Indian situation is highly concerning and poses an extreme danger to religious peace worldwide, as it affects a population of over 250 million Indian Muslims. Its repercussions could also impact Indians working in predominantly Muslim countries. Moreover, this situation has a tangible impact on the exercise of the majority of fundamental rights and freedoms, such as the right to property protection, personal freedom, inviolability of the home, and freedom of worship in general.

We recommend all countries with records of anti-Muslim sentiments to:

- take a zero-tolerance approach to racist and religiously-motivated abuse in the society and online, including schools, neighborhoods, public places and workplace by taking victim experiences seriously and fortify efforts to present the victims with adequate and timely remedy and redress.
- Recognise Islamophobia as a specific form of racism and make it a national cause, just like anti-Semitism.
- Take concrete measures to ease the documentation of anti-Muslims hate speech and hate crimes.

Finally, we call on the UN Special Rapporteur on racism to monitor trends of Islamophobia round the world, report the findings to the Human Rights Council and the General assembly and offer the international community with recommendations on how to address the issue

1. Fourteenth OIC Report on Islamophobia Presented to the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers Islamabad

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan 22-23 March 2022 December 2020 – January 2022,

[https://www.oic-](https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2022/14th_Annual_Report_on_Islamophobia_March_2022_r2.pdf)

[oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2022/14th_Annual_Report_on_Islamophobia_March_2022_r2.pdf](https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2022/14th_Annual_Report_on_Islamophobia_March_2022_r2.pdf)

2. *ibid*

3. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/11/decades-after-9-11-muslims-battle-islamophobia-in>

4. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/>

5. <https://torontosun.com/news/local-news/man-charged-after-threats-uttered-car-driven-at-mosque-worshipper-cops>

6. <https://angusreid.org/islamophobia-canada-quebec/>

7. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/islamophobia-is-entrenched-in-canada-senate-findings/2876915>