

Islamophobia

2007 Hate Crime Survey

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Acknowledgements

Human Rights First gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Ford Foundation.

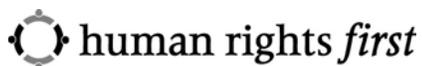
This report was co-authored by Michael McClintock and Paul LeGendre and edited by Michael Posner. Alexis Aronowitz and Jaideep Dargan contributed to the research and writing of the report.

About Us

Human Rights First is a leading human rights advocacy organization based in New York City and Washington, DC. Since 1978, we have worked in the United States and abroad to create a secure and humane world – advancing justice, human dignity, and respect for the rule of law. All of our activities are supported by private contributions. We accept no government funds.

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Headquarters

333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001-5108

Tel.: 212.845.5263
Fax: 212.845.5299

www.humanrightsfirst.org

Washington D.C. Office

100 Maryland Avenue, NE
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002-5625

Tel: 202.547.5692
Fax: 202.543.5999

Preface

This report on Islamophobia is a companion to the Human Rights First *2007 Hate Crime Survey*, which is a review of the rising tide of hate crimes covering the region from the far east of the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states across Europe to North America: the countries of the 56-member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In releasing the *2007 Hate Crime Survey*, Human Rights First documents and analyzes the reality of racist violence and other forms of intolerance. We have reviewed available reports on violence motivated by prejudice and hatred, including the findings of the handful of official monitoring systems that provide meaningful statistical information. This data, combined with the findings of nongovernmental monitoring organizations, provides important insights into the nature and incidence of violent hate crimes.

Our aim is to raise the profile of these insidious crimes and the challenges they pose to societies and communities that are becoming increasingly diverse. Many of these crimes are the everyday occurrences of broken windows, physical assaults, burnt out homes, and violent intimidation that are a consequence of prejudice and hatred. Our emphasis is on the violence at the sharp edge of discrimination and what can be done about it. We are seeking to overcome official indifference and indecision in the fight against discriminatory violence. The *2007 Hate Crime Survey* is accompanied by three companion surveys which look in greater detail at specific forms of discrimination and violence: antisemitism, Islamophobia, and homophobia. These reports are available on our website at: www.humanrightsfirst.org.

The *2007 Hate Crime Survey* as well as these companion surveys builds upon the findings of our 2005 report, *Everyday Fears: A Survey of Violent Hate Crimes in Europe and North America*, which addressed antisemitic and other racist and religiously-motivated violence as well as violence motivated by biases based on gender, disability, and sexual orientation. In that report, we also examined government responses to hate crimes in each of the OSCE participating states and found that only a handful of governments had taken concrete measures to effectively monitor, respond to, and prevent hate crimes.

The response of governments has not markedly improved since then. Human Rights First continues to believe that governments need to do more to combat violent discrimination. In the *2007 Hate Crime Survey*, we offer a series of recommendations to governments with a view to moving forward in combating violent hate crimes. In particular, we are urging governments to strengthen criminal law and law enforcement procedures required to combat hate crimes. Stronger laws that expressly address violent hate crimes are important tools if governments are to more effectively deter, detect, and punish them. We likewise call on governments to establish systems of official monitoring and data collection to fill the hate crime information gap. This is an essential means to assess and respond to patterns of discriminatory violence affecting particular population groups.

Executive Summary

In 2006, discrimination and violence against Muslims persisted throughout much of Europe. Though the number of registered incidents decreased from a peak level in 2005, after the subway bombings in London, the number of violent incidents remains high. In Belgium, in May, an anti-immigrant fanatic murdered a pregnant Malian au pair, and the two-year-old Belgian infant in her charge. Shortly before, he had shot and seriously wounded a woman of Turkish origin wearing a Muslim headscarf, as she sat on a bench reading. In Poland, in July, at least four men attacked a Moroccan actor at an antiracism festival in the northern city of Olsztyn, hitting him over the head with a bottle and stabbing him repeatedly, leaving him in critical condition. Both cases illustrate the double discrimination of racism and religious intolerance so frequently evident in attacks against Muslims.

Other recent incidents have included bombings and arson attacks on mosques and Muslim institutions in many countries, including Austria, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Russia, and the United Kingdom, with attacks on Muslim cemeteries also widely reported. Assaults on individuals ranged from spitting, shoving, or the snatching of women's headscarves, to punches and kicks and lethal bludgeoning, stabbings, and shootings. Personal assaults were often accompanied by shouted insults alluding to religion and ethnic or national origin—sometimes expressing both racism and religious hatred. Muslims were often singled out for attack because of their apparel, their association with Muslim institutions, or even the color of their skin, while members of minorities that are often mistaken for Muslims were also attacked.

The perpetrators included members of organized extremist movements, racist youth cultures, and ordinary people acting in a climate of xenophobia and nationalist chauvinism. In western Europe, anti-Muslim violence was driven by fears of Islamist terrorism and newly mainstream trends to present immigration and Muslim minorities as a threat to national identity. In parts of eastern Europe and in particular in the Russian Federation, proliferating nationalist movements have propagated ideologies of ethnic and religious supremacy and fueled growing violence toward national minorities, in particular the largely Muslim minorities of Russia's southern territories.

A majority of governments in Europe still do not track and record anti-Muslim incidents through official state mechanisms. In nations where the recording of data does take place, many governments still under-report such incidents and significantly under-record official complaints.

In addition to continuing fears of suicide bombings and other violent attacks, two series of events dominated international discussions of the status of Muslims in Europe. First, there was nationwide rioting in France in late 2005 that brought national and international attention to previously unheard grievances of the largely Muslim minority population on the outskirts of major cities. The second set of events followed the publication of cartoons ridiculing Islam by a leading Danish daily newspaper in September 2005, at a time of heightened xenophobia and anti-immigrant discourse in Denmark and in much of Europe. After protests by Muslims and others that the cartoons were denigrating and offensive, they were republished in early 2006 by mainstream media across Europe. Non-violent protests

in Europe were followed by demonstrations across much of the Muslim world, many of which became violent, further contributing to and exacerbating European xenophobia and anti-Muslim bias.

Introduction

In France, Austria and other countries anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric has been stoked by extremist political figures like Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Jorg Haider in Austria. Their rise to prominence has helped promote anti-Muslim rhetoric and make it more part of the mainstream political debate and discourse in their countries. These and other radical political leaders have sought to legitimize xenophobia and have in doing so contributed to the upswing in anti-Muslim discrimination and violence across Europe. Coupled with heightened national security concerns and economic uncertainty, this has translated into a political mood in which Muslims are the object of fear and exclusion.

There is an everyday pattern of racist and religious violence against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslims in many parts of Europe and North America that has little to do with the emergence of Al Qaeda or other extremist groups or events in the Middle East. Much of it is tied to longstanding racism and intolerance in communities where European Muslims live. This pattern of intolerance and exclusion has been exacerbated in recent years by the reality of violent extremism in the name of Islam, and an increased fear about future acts of serious violence directed at civilian populations in Europe – like the London subway bombings or the violent bombings in the Madrid railroad station.

Anti-Muslim violence has been exacerbated in the post-September 11 world by the perpetuation of stereotypes and generalizations about Muslims, and the idea of collective responsibility of all Muslims for the acts of others sharing the same faith. A crime committed by a Muslim, according to this logic, exposes all other Muslims to retaliation, holding every Muslim hostage to

and responsible for the behavior of every other. Accordingly, acts of terrorism, when these attacks against innocent civilians are attributed to Muslims – or worse, executed in the name of Islam – have tended to generate random reprisals against those identified rightly or wrongly as co-religionists of the perpetrators.

Discrimination and violence against Muslims has frequently taken the form of assaults on ordinary people in their shops, schools, or homes, often accompanied by indiscriminate racist and anti-Muslim epithets. While attacks on Muslims may still often be motivated primarily by traditional forms of racism, intolerance is increasingly directed at Muslim immigrants and other minorities expressly because of their religion. The present day reality of violent extremism in the name of Islam has raised the threat to Muslims in Europe. Many of them fear that they will be picked out and victimized at random if future attacks occur.

In the immediate aftermath of extremist violence tied to Islamist movements, backlash attacks often take place targeting Muslims or those mistakenly believed to be Muslims. In the wake of the London bombings on July 7, 2005, hate crime attacks of this kind increased in London by an estimated 600 percent.¹ These included assaults throughout the country on individuals identified as Muslims, leading to several deaths and serious injuries, arson attacks on four mosques, and serious damage to other mosques and other Muslim institutions.

This rise in political violence has brought into the open a longstanding strain of political discourse in Europe that projected immigrants in general and Muslims in particular as a threat not only to security but to Euro-

pean homogeneity and culture. Public debate on immigration and the status of Europe's minorities increasingly has taken on an aggressive tone of "us" versus "them."

As part of this political discourse, Muslims as a group are blamed for the marginalization they feel, even while the discriminatory policies and practices that exclude them from the mainstream are reinforced. Critics of the failure of some parts of Europe's Muslim population to fully integrate, in turn, are often advocates of measures that would further isolate and stigmatize these minorities. The supposed choice presented is often posed as integration or assimilation, even when discrimination still provides formidable barriers to equality even to those who are most thoroughly assimilated.

Hostility and Violence toward Muslims

Obstacles to Religious Freedom

Obstacles to religious freedom for Muslims that provide a backdrop to violence have included the harassment of women wearing Islamic dress, and the denial of permits to build mosques or to establish religious schools—with the latter leaving most Muslims seeking religious training no alternative other than to attend schools in Muslim countries. In its periodic reports on discrimination in the Council of Europe, the anti-discrimination body the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) highlights bars on establishing places of worship or schools by Muslims as an ongoing problem of discrimination. Proposals for the building of mosques continue to be the object of political opposition in many countries.

- In **Germany**, ECRI observes, Muslims faced continued discrimination with respect to “opening of places of worship and kindergartens or provision of religious instruction in schools.” Muslim women who wear the headscarf, in turn, are “particularly vulnerable” to harassment and discrimination in schools and employment.²
- In **Greece**, there is no official mosque available for the some 200,000 Muslims who live in the Athens area, due to opposition from the Greek Orthodox Church over the location and funding of such a mosque. Muslims have been obliged to worship in makeshift settings in homes and apartments. After thirty years of negotiation, the government in July 2006 said it would authorize the building of Athens’

first official mosque, but no time-table for the construction was announced.³

- In **Norway**, Vidar Kleppe, an opposition political leader, has pledged to block the building of a new mosque in Kristiansand, declaring that the proposed mosque would be “a beachhead for criminal activity and inhumane attitudes,” and that “[w]e will not have a Muslim symbol in our city.” The city’s mayor spoke to condemn the statement, declaring that: “You can’t say things like this. We can criticize specific events but not generalize about an entire religion.”⁴
- In **Spain**, ECRI reported in 2006 that Muslims “have experienced opposition, sometimes with explicitly racist content, when pursuing plans to open places of worship.”⁵

The absence of equal treatment in many parts of Europe extends even to the dead, as permits to establish Muslim cemeteries are also frequently denied. There has been some limited progress. The official plan to allow a mosque to be built in Athens, for example, includes also provisions for the first Muslim cemetery to be established there.⁶ In September 2006, moreover, the first Muslim cemetery in **Denmark** opened in Brøndby, south of Copenhagen, after fifteen years of protests and demands. The dead of Denmark’s estimated 200,000 Muslims had hitherto been buried in Muslim sections of public cemeteries or shipped abroad for burial.⁷ But even before it opened, racist vandals in July 2006 vandalized the new cemetery with swastikas and by driving a car across the plot.⁸

Vandalism in Muslim cemeteries or in Muslim sections of public cemeteries has likewise occurred in **France** and the **Russian Federation**. In France, in April 2007, vandals daubed Nazi slogans and swastikas on about 50 graves in the Muslim section of a WWI cemetery. The act was decried by then-French President Jacques Chirac as “an unspeakable act that scars the conscience.”⁹ In the Russian Federation, on August 3, 2006 vandals smashed about ten gravestones and memorials in a closed Muslim cemetery in Yekaterinburg.¹⁰ On August 6, 2006, vandals desecrated a number of Muslim gravestones in a cemetery in the village of Reamash in the Moscow region. The leader of the Sergeev Posad Muslim community was quoted as saying that “we believe that this crime was committed on the basis of racial and religious hatred.”¹¹

Attacks on Places of Worship

Mosques and other places of worship were particular targets of vandalism and arson in 2005 and 2006. In some incidents, religious texts were also desecrated and destroyed.

- In **Austria**, unknown attackers hurled rocks through the windows of a mosque on September 24, 2005 in Linz.¹² Prior to that, in 2003, unknown assailants vandalized a Muslim cemetery in the same city.¹³
- In the **Netherlands**, in Rotterdam, on June 15, 2005, a man known as a follower of extreme right organizations set fire to the Surinamese Djama Mahid Shaan-e-Islam mosque. The attackers wrote epithets on the walls of the mosque including “Theo rest in peace,” “no mosques in the south,” and “Lonsdale.”¹⁴
- In the **Russian Federation**, in September 2006, attackers broke windows and threw gasoline bombs into a mosque in the city of Yaroslavl as a prayer service was underway, but no injuries were reported. The attack, in which windows were also broken in cars parked by the mosque, came one day after the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. Although reported by religious leaders there, police contacted by the press reportedly said they were unaware of the incident.¹⁵
- In **Spain**, in Soria, on January 26, 2006, assailants burned a copy of the Koran and threw other religious books in a trash can outside a mosque. Three months before, the mosque had been defaced with graffiti.¹⁶
- Also in **Spain** over the Easter weekend in 2006, arsonists attacked the Sidi Bel Abbas sanctuary, a mosque located in the city of Cueta. The attack came three months after arsonists attacked a similar sanctuary within the enclave.¹⁷
- In the **United Kingdom**, a rash of attacks on mosques and Muslim religious centers followed the terrorist attacks of July 7, 2005. They included the following:
 - On July 8:
 - Attackers threw fire-bombs at the Al Madina Jamia mosque in Leeds.¹⁸
 - Attackers threw stones at the Jamia mosque in Totterdown, Bristol.
 - Two men poured gasoline through the letter-box of the Shajala mosque, in Birkenhead, Wirral, setting the building alight. Boshir Ullah, an elderly imam at the mosque, was trapped in his upstairs bedroom before firefighters extinguished the blaze and pulled him to safety. Paramedics treated the victim for smoke inhalation. The mosque had previously been damaged by fire bombs after the September 11, 2001 attacks.¹⁹
 - Arsonists attempted to set fire to the Jamiat Tablighul Islam Mosque in Armley, Leeds, by throwing a burning cloth through a window, according to police.²⁰
 - On July 9:
 - Vandals broke seven windows at the Shajalal mosque in Easton, Bristol.²¹
 - Vandals smashed 19 windows at the mosque at the Mazahirul Uloom Education and Cultural Institution, in London. The mosque had been a target of threatening hate mail, with one note reading: “You filthy Muslim dogs. You will be torched this Friday. Many Muslim pigs will burn.”²²
 - On July 10:
 - A fire-bomb attack on the Tan Bank, Wellington mosque, in Shropshire was prevented from damaging its interior by fire services.²³
 - Two women vandalized the Islamic Centre, in Rose Lane, Norwich, breaking four windows.²⁴
 - On July 18:
 - Vandals broke into the Shah Jalal Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in Cathays, Cardiff (Wales) and strewed the interior with animal parts.²⁵

- In the **United States**, in Lubbock, Texas, attackers vandalized a mosque three times in the month of October. In the most recent attack, on October 26, 2006, vandals spray-painted the word “redemption” on the exterior of the building. Vandals had trampled on the mosque’s flower bed and smashed its outdoor lights in two previous incidents.²⁶
- Also in the **United States**, in Clarksville, Tennessee, a defaced copy of the Koran was found on the steps of the Islamic Center of Clarksville, on April 7, 2007. The Koran was also smeared with two strips of bacon. Authorities labeled the incident a hate crime and officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation were also involved in the investigation.²⁷

Assaults on Individuals

Violent attacks are another form of anti-Muslim sentiment and prejudice that is commonly termed Islamophobia. The everyday violence of anti-Muslim bias is both symbolic of larger problems of discrimination and a powerful instrument of intimidation.

Accounts of individual cases and the reports of European antidiscrimination bodies have highlighted the prevalence of attacks on “visible” minorities, and in particular people who are distinguished by distinctive clothing or other signs of faith. ECRI, in its most recent report on **Austria**, for example, observes that Muslims are “particularly vulnerable to harassment and discrimination when displaying visible signs of their faith.”²⁸

While no specific incident triggered an international wave of anti-Muslim violence in 2006, attacks took place within the regional context of increasingly polarized political debates concerning Muslim integration within the European Union. Attacks were frequently both racist and anti-Muslim, fueled by a hatred of immigrants and minorities made even more volatile by religion. These incidents took the form of personal assaults on individuals identified, rightly or wrongly, as Muslims. In a number of reported incidents, attacks motivated by racist and religious hatred resulted in murder.

- In **Belgium**, on May 11, 2006, anti-immigrant fanatic Hans Van Themsche murdered 24-year-old Oulemata Oudibo, a pregnant Malian au pair, and the two-year-old Belgian infant in her charge, Luna Drowart. Shortly before he had shot and seriously wounded Songul Koç, a woman of Turkish origin wearing a Muslim headscarf, as she sat on a bench reading. The attacker was shot and detained by police soon afterward. Citizens mobilized to remember the victims of the attacks of May 11
- and other incidents of racist violence with a March Against Racism in Antwerp on May 26, 2006.²⁹
- Also in **Belgium**, on April 30, 2006, 23-year-old Moroccan immigrant Mohammed Bouazza was reportedly chased by racist white youths after an incident outside an Antwerp nightclub and later found drowned in the Schelde River.³⁰
- In **Denmark**, on July 9, 2005 an unidentified man in Copenhagen reportedly shouted “London” as he attacked a Sikh bus driver with a baseball bat, having mistaken him for a Muslim.³¹
- In **Poland**, on July 22, 2006, at least four men attacked Moroccan actor Abdel M. at an antiracism festival in the northern city of Olsztyn, hitting him over the head with a bottle and stabbing him repeatedly, leaving him in critical condition. Abdel M., a member of the Migrator troupe of refugee actors, had just finished a performance about the life of refugees in Poland when he was attacked. Cameroonian national Simon Mol, who heads the theatre group, said “I spoke to him when he regained consciousness and he told me that before he was attacked his attackers said there were ‘too many foreigners.’”³²
- In the **Russian Federation**, as Human Rights First reported in its 2006 report *Minorities Under Siege: Hate Crimes and Related Intolerance in the Russian Federation*, people from the Caucasus and Central Asia – both Russian citizens and foreigners – are probably the group suffering the highest number of racist attacks. At the same time, reporting of attacks on migrants from these areas and others who have not established Russian nationality probably remains the least comprehensive, as these victims also tend to fear police abuse or arrest and are least likely to report bias-motivated attacks. The attacks come in an environment in which discrimination against non-Slavic, non-Orthodox Russian citizens is openly advocated. Attacks on people from these regions are generally perceived to be motivated by racism, but sometimes have an overlay of religious hatred and intolerance: most people from the Caucasus and Central Asia are Muslims.
- In the **United Kingdom**, there were a number of serious incidents in 2006: on June 9, 34-year-old Pierre Brabant confronted Imam Said Jaziri outside the St. Michael mosque, brandishing a knife and remarking, “Do you want to die a Martyr?” before asking “Are you carrying belts full of explosives?” The assailant fled on foot without physically injuring the imam. Police arrived on the scene moments later and arrested Brabant. Police subsequently

announced that they were treating the incident as a hate crime.³³

- On July 7, Alan Young walked into a health center in Northampton and punched a Muslim man in the face. Young made remarks about Muslims and shouted it was “kill a Muslim day.” He made further comments about Muslims and hit another Asian man on a nearby property. Young’s actions came on the first anniversary of the July 7 terrorist attacks. Young admitted to the charges of common assault, religiously aggravated assault, and harassment and was given a four-month suspended jail sentence.³⁴
- On January 11, 2007, a white male in his twenties attacked a 37-year-old Muslim woman in Southampton. According to police, the assailant hurled racial slurs at the woman and unsuccessfully tried to pull off her veil. The unidentified victim resisted and managed to flee the scene without further harm.³⁵
- In the **United States**, in Brooklyn, New York, on the night of October 29, 2006, a group of five teenagers assaulted Shahid Amber, a 24-year-old Pakistani immigrant while hurling anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant slurs at him, calling him a “terrorist,” and shouting “Go back to your country.” The attackers reportedly spit on him, knocked him to the ground, kicked him, and punched him in the head and body with brass knuckles. Police arrested the five suspects, who were charged with assault as a hate crime, gang assault, and possession of a deadly weapon. The five reportedly pled not guilty to the charges.³⁶

tragedy, declaring that: “Nobody should come to me, asking me to hate all Arabs.... The youths who killed my son were scum. It’s that kind of individual that inspires hatred in me...But don’t come to me making generalizations. Scum can be found everywhere.”³⁹

Almost two weeks after the murder, authorities confirmed that the suspects were not in fact North Africans when two Polish nationals were arrested and charged with the murder. Some national authorities expressed remorse for the public branding of the North African community as complicit in the killings. Minister of Justice Laurette Onkelinx spoke out clearly in this regard in criticizing those who “without knowledge of the results of the investigation had pinpointed a culprit, stigmatized an ethnic community.” “Now,” he added, “they have to face their own conscience.”⁴⁰

In the **United Kingdom**, Muslim organizations reported increased levels of hostility and harassment against Muslim women following the continued public debates over a ban on Muslim headscarves. In October, British Labor Party leader Jack Straw told a local newspaper that the Muslim niqab – a veil which fully covers the face – constitutes a “visible statement of separation and of difference” and that it should be banned in the public square. While Straw’s comments received support from British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other officials in the U.K. government, Muslim organizations in Britain, like the Muslim Safety Forum, reported that Straw’s comments led to an increase in harassment and attacks against women that wear Muslim headscarves.⁴¹ The visibility of Muslim women who wear a headscarf make them easy targets for those who wish to carry out an indiscriminate attack on a symbol of Islam.

Hostility towards Muslims

In some cases, crimes attributed to Muslim immigrants, rightly or wrongly, became the object of national outrage and fueled racist violence. In **Belgium**, authorities’ attribution of the April 12, 2006 robbery and murder of white Belgian teenager Joe Van Holsbeeck to young “North Africans” set off a national outpouring of grief and outrage.³⁷ Much of the outrage was directed at Belgium’s large Moroccan minority, and while some Muslim leaders themselves called for people to turn in the suspects if they knew them, others were reviled for failing to help produce the killers.³⁸

More than 80,000 people went into the Brussels streets in solidarity with the victim’s family. The family of the slain boy had opposed efforts by the political right to transform the march into an anti-immigration demonstration. His mother spoke out firmly to condemn anti-immigration parties that tried to capitalize upon the

Trigger Events

Since 2001, foreign and domestic events have repeatedly led to periods of violent backlash against Muslim populations in the United States and European Union. In the **United States**, the Arab and South Asian communities, and others perceived to be Muslim, suffered a surge in hate incidents in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

In Europe, too, the September 11 attacks prompted a significant increase in hate incidents against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. At that time, in the **Netherlands**, for example, mosques in The Hague and Vlissingen were attacked, an Islamic school in Nijmegen was set on fire, and an arson attack, though frustrated, was made on a mosque in Zwolle. In total, the Anne Frank House, one of the principal independent monitors of hate crimes in the Netherlands, registered 190 incidents within a two and a half month period. The surge of violent incidents after September 11 was short-lived but accounted for some 60 percent of the violent hate crimes reported in 2001.

In 2004, the **Netherlands** was again shaken when the maverick film-maker Theo Van Gogh was murdered in an Amsterdam street by a young man of immigrant origin, a radical Muslim, who invoked the name of Islam in the killing. In the immediate aftermath of the killing, hate crimes monitors at the Anne Frank House and the University of Leiden registered 174 anti-Muslim incidents in a single month. Bomb threats and arson attacks rose dramatically. The target of many of these threats and attacks were mosques and Islamic schools.⁴²

The July 7, 2005 Bombings in London

The bombings in London in July 2005 served as the single most powerful trigger event in the last two years. On July 7, 2005, a series of coordinated bomb attacks unleashed by Muslim extremists in London's transportation system left 52 people dead and 770 injured. As noted, nongovernmental organizations and police agencies in the **United Kingdom** reported a surge in anti-Muslim incidents in the immediate aftermath of the attack. In addition to the attacks on mosques mentioned above, some of the incidents in the aftermath of the bombings, ranging from harassment to murder, included the following:

- On July 10, a gang of white youths fatally attacked Kamal Raza Butt, a Pakistani Immigrant and shopkeeper, in his store, while making ethnic slurs and yelling "Taliban." One of the assailants, 17-year-old Mardell Pennant, pled guilty to his involvement in the beating and received an eighteen month sentence for manslaughter. A second youth was also charged for the crime, but, due to a lack of evidence, charges were dropped against the second teen. The police did not characterize the murder as a racially or religiously motivated crime.⁴³

- On July 29, two white teenagers attacked a group of dark-skinned, Asian teenagers. The assailants punched and kicked the Asians in the head and body while uttering racial slurs, leaving one victim with a broken jaw and the others with cuts and bruises. Detective Inspector Michael Smith, of the Sutton police said the police are “absolutely sure this was a reprisal attack” for the 7/7 bombings.⁴⁴
- On July 30, an unidentified assailant attacked an 18-year-old Iraqi youth with a broken bottle in Portsmouth. Police said the attacker uttered racial slurs before breaking a bottle and cutting the victim’s throat. The victim survived after emergency medical attention.⁴⁵
- On August 4, two men shouting anti-Muslim epithets punched Fawad Qayyum, breaking his jaw. The assailants threatened to smash his car and kill him. A witness at the scene told the police that the crime was racially motivated.⁴⁶

In the first week following the July 7 attacks, the Monitoring Group, a London-based NGO that monitors hate crimes in the United Kingdom, received 88 emergency reports of incidents involving violence and abuse.⁴⁷ The Monitoring Group received continuing high levels of reports of anti-Muslim backlash until October 2005, at which point the number of complaints fell to pre-July 7 levels.⁴⁸

The European Monitoring Center for Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) reported a less dramatic picture of anti-Muslim backlash to the bombings outside the United Kingdom in a special report. This found that while national focal points in countries across the E.U. reported incidents against “members and property of the Muslim community” after July 7, such incidents tended “generally to be sporadic and isolated.”⁴⁹ The report concludes that there was “no significant increase in incidents” against Muslims in most E.U. member states, but noted a sharp rise in hate attacks within the United Kingdom.

The EUMC report highlights the efforts of the U.K. government and police to prevent anti-Muslim violence in the days after July 7, even as massive security measures were undertaken in response to the terrorist attacks. The report notes that, “within hours of the attacks, the police forces across the country were sent advice from the Association of Chief Police Officers on how to counter any backlash....The Met Police (MET) contacted Muslim community organizations and stepped up patrols within targeted communities such as around mosques.”

The EUMC also concluded that the initial response by the U.K. government, the police, the Mayor of London,

and Muslim organizations demonstrated that positive lessons had been learned from similar crises in other E.U. countries and in the United States. This particularly relates to the speed of reaction by government, the police services, and Muslim organizations, the decisive nature of the political leadership displayed at the national and London level, the positive engagement with the Muslim community, the inter-faith support offered by the Christian and Jewish faith representatives and the public support of the police service. The EUMC concludes that, the number of incidents “reduced to ‘normal’ levels a few weeks after the bombings.”⁵⁰

The Metropolitan Police Service’s (MET) reporting on the extent of the backlash include statistical data comparing the week-by-week incidence of incidents with reports from the same time periods in 2004.⁵¹

	Number Incidents 2004	Number Incidents 2005
July 4-10	11	68
July 11-17	22	92
July 18-24	20	67
July 25-31	9	79
August 1-7	7	60
August 8-14	9	35
August 15-21	10	28

In December 2005, the Crown Prosecution Service released its statistics on racist and religious crimes in their 2005-2006 annual report. At the public release of the report, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ken Macdonald QC said:

After the 7 July bombings it was feared that there would be a significant backlash against the Muslim community and that we would see a large rise in religiously aggravated offences. The fears of a large rise in offences appear to be unfounded. Although there were more cases in July 2005 than for any other month, the rise did not continue into August and overall in 2005-06 there was an increase of nine cases compared to the previous year.⁵²

Among the key findings was that 51 religiously-aggravated charges were prosecuted in 2005, an increase of 18.5 percent over 2004. In the 22 cases where the victim’s religion was identified, 81.8 percent (18) were identified as Muslim, while authorities noted 21 cases where the victim’s religion was not identified. During 2004, in the 30 cases where the victim’s

religion was identified, 23 of those victims were Muslim (67.6 percent), while there were only 4 cases in which the victim's religious identity was unknown.⁵³

Clarifying the Crown Prosecution Service's findings that anti-Muslim violence had not increased, Julie Seddon, spokesperson at the Crown Prosecution Service, explained that this conclusion was based solely on the cases that came before the Crown Prosecution Service, a minority of actual incidents.⁵⁴ In many of the backlash cases, it was believed victims did not file reports with the police, while in other cases in which criminal complaints were made, the case never made it through the Crown Prosecution Service because no arrests were made. Other religiously-motivated hate crimes may not have been considered in the review of backlash violence on the grounds that it could not be directly attributed to the London bombings, particularly if the suspect did not refer directly to the bombings as a motivation for the attack.

The Monitoring Group observed that in general, the Crown Prosecution Service and the police in the Greater London area are actively involved in investigating and prosecuting hate crimes while proactively reaching out to black and minority ethnic communities. However, the organization further highlighted that this is not the case throughout the United Kingdom; in other jurisdictions, hate crime cases are not properly registered as bias incidents by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service often does not add the element of racial or religious motivation to charges of "grievous bodily harm" because prosecutions can be more difficult when elements of hate or bias motivation are presented at trial.⁵⁵

A Background of Discrimination and Alienation

While foreign or domestic incidents can be trigger events that expose Muslim communities to periods of extreme violence, these episodes of racist and religious violence cannot be assessed in isolation. Rather, these waves of violence are extensions of preexisting relations between Muslim populations and the larger community in which they live. The prejudice and harassment Muslims face at the best of times is a major factor in the severity and duration of backlash violence. This everyday malaise of discrimination and exclusion found particularly dramatic expression in two series of events in late 2005 and 2006.

Nationwide rioting in France, in October and November 2005, brought to national and international attention the realities and grievances of a largely Muslim minority population that was normally kept out of sight in vast housing projects on the outskirts of major cities. And in Denmark, the commissioning and publication by a leading conservative newspaper of cartoons that mocked Islam and the prophet Mohammed both outraged Europe's Muslim population and provoked an international reaction that resulted in its further marginalization.

The two particular series of events highlighted the increasing marginalization of Europe's Muslim minorities and provided a backdrop to continuing discrimination, exclusion, and violence. In its 2006 annual report, the EUMC attached particular attention to the civil disturbances that extended to most French cities late in October and November 2005.

These involved mainly young men of North African origin, stimulating debates about the alienation of such young men and the discrimination and exclusion that they often experi-

ence, particularly in employment. The situation in general is influenced by fear and suspicion, the feeling and experience of not belonging.⁵⁶

In its report on Muslims in Europe, released earlier in 2006, the EUMC had stressed the stereotypes and generalizations that surround any discussion of Europe's Muslim minorities, and the importance of a constructive response. "The central question," by this account, is how to avoid generalizations and stereotypes, how to "reduce fear," and how to make European societies more cohesive "while countering marginalization and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or belief."⁵⁷ The riots of late 2005 brought all of these issues to the fore.

The Riots in France

The riots in France were triggered by the October 27, 2005 electrocution deaths in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois of 15-year-old Bouna Traore and 17-year-old Zyed Benna as they hid from police. The incident took place near one of the vast suburban housing projects in which a large proportion of France's ethnic minorities and immigrant population are concentrated.⁵⁸ Within days, young people in the periphery of cities across the country joined in protests, setting cars alight and rampaging through city streets. By early November, riots were reported in 274 French towns and cities.⁵⁹

Then-Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy contributed to tensions before the disturbances while promoting urban anti-crime initiatives in the Paris suburb of Argenteuil, on October 25. Pelted with rocks and bottles from a hostile crowd of protestors, Sarkozy described violent

residents of the housing projects as “scum” and “gangrene” and said the area should be “cleaned out with a power hose.” (“*nettoyer au Kärcher*”).⁶⁰ (Then-President Jacques Chirac responded to outrage over the statements with a call for “respect” in the use of language). As the riots spread over the next two weeks, Sarkozy’s widely reported comments sustained resentment and fueled the flames.

The extent of the violence and the accompanying outpouring of minority grievances indicated a depth of resentment and despair that had not previously been expressed – or acknowledged. And while the majority of the young people involved in the protests were believed to be of North African origin and nominal Muslims, religion appeared to play almost no part in the events of October and November. When grievances were expressed, they were the grievances of discrimination and exclusion: racist police harassment and brutality and obstacles to employment for young men with Muslim or other “foreign” names topped the list.

Although members of minorities in the housing estates outside of most French cities face day to day discrimination, French policy has long been based on the notion that to distinguish between French citizens even to combat discrimination would in itself be discriminatory. As a consequence, this principle of equality in France has been invoked to bar the production of government statistics and surveys that can prove and help remedy discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or national origin.

This does not mean that these distinctions are not made in practice by police and public officials.⁶¹ Claims of racial profiling are a major grievance of minority young people, and police data cited in official reports on hate crimes make clear that appearance and apparent ethnicity are a part of police reporting. In official statistics on hate crimes, for example, high levels of incidents are registered against citizens of North African origin, but under the category of assaults on “immigrants.”⁶² Statistics that could confirm discrimination in the criminal justice system, in housing, in education, or in employment, however, are unavailable: on the grounds that the law makes all French citizens equal.

But in practice, Muslim and other minorities in France are not equal in their enjoyment of the rights and prerogatives of other citizens. Young people whose parents or grandparents originated in France’s former North African colonies claim that in practice they are systematically turned away by potential employers and randomly picked up by the police simply because they stand out from other French citizens. Even private monitoring systems to document this discrimination

might be barred as illegal. Often disparaged as “immigrants,” these French citizens of North African or Sub-Saharan African ancestry protest that they have neither the equal opportunity nor the respect guaranteed other compatriots by the state.

Making young people from minorities feel like second class citizens, while barring official monitoring of discriminatory treatment, was a principal factor leading to the riots of October-November 2005. Discrimination and a sense of hopelessness also creates fertile ground for alienated young people to turn to extremist ideologies, including the virulent forms of antisemitism promoted by Islamist and rightist organizations.⁶³

On November 18, 2005, French Equal Opportunities Minister Azouz Begag broke ranks with French tradition by urging the government to reverse a ban on collecting data based on ethnicity or religion as a means to combat discrimination. Citing job discrimination as a key grievance expressed in protests, Begag called for action on the grounds that “[w]e need to see France’s true colors.”

The Cartoons in Denmark

A negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the mainstream media has accompanied political trends toward more restrictive policies toward immigration and new obstacles to the enjoyment of civil rights by Muslim communities.

On September 29, 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 commissioned cartoons that mock Islam, including some that portrayed the prophet Mohammed as a terrorist. When Danish Muslims found both the media and government unresponsive to their concerns about the cartoons, some Muslim leaders traveled to the Middle East to seek international support for their grievances. The response combined threatening diplomatic demarches and growing violence. The cartoons were reprinted in Austria in January 2006, and on February 1, as protests proliferated in Muslim countries, appeared also in major newspapers in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. News editors claimed they ran the cartoons in order to uphold the right to freedom of expression in the face of protests, but did so in an increasingly threatening environment for Muslims and immigrants.⁶⁴

The consequence of the initiatives – and the reaction to it – was to further marginalize Muslim communities in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe. That the publication of the cartoons would be not just offensive but harmful to Danish Muslims and immigrants should have been a foregone conclusion. At issue was not the right of *Jyllands-Posten* to publish cartoons that could be

expected to be hurtful and offensive to a vulnerable minority, but whether it was responsible to do so. The violent protests, however, did even greater damage to minority rights.

Danish Muslims had immediately protested the publication of the offensive cartoons, but it was in February 2006 that the most serious response erupted on the international scene, with violence and threats of boycotts of Danish goods in a number of Muslim countries. Debate on the propriety and the religious insensitivity of the original publication in Europe was transformed almost overnight into expressions of outrage at the effrontery of foreign critics to challenge the right to freedom of expression in Europe.

The suggestion that the publication of the offending cartoons in itself represented disdain and disrespect toward Denmark's Muslim population was swept away by denunciations of *Muslim* intolerance. In solidarity, further mainstream newspapers across much of Europe republished some or all of the Danish cartoons; in doing so, they deliberately or inadvertently played to the gallery of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim bias and became political fodder for Middle East governments seeking public support as champions of Islam.

The further expressions of violent outrage, mainly from sources outside of Europe, tended to reaffirm stereotypes of Muslim violence and intolerance that were in turn laid to Muslims everywhere. On February 4, 2006 protestors set fire to the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria; on February 5, protestors in Lebanon burned the Danish consulate; and on February 7, demonstrators assaulted the embassy in Teheran as the Iranian government declared it was breaking relations with Denmark. Four people were killed in protests in Afghanistan on February 7, while others died in protests in the following week in Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and in Somalia.

On February 5, 2006, a young man murdered Father Andrea Santoro, a Catholic priest in Trabzon, Turkey, and reportedly told police the Danish cartoons had been his inspiration.⁶⁵ In Sudan, Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed, the editor of the Khartoum daily newspaper *Alwifaq*, had published an article attacking the cartoons, but was denounced for having illustrated this with examples. On September 5, 2006, he was kidnapped from his Khartoum home and found decapitated a day later, decapitated. Although he may in fact have been murdered because of political and social commentaries published in this newspaper, for which he had previously received death threats, his murder has been laid to the Danish cartoons.⁶⁶

Iran's official response to the Danish cartoon affair was to break relations with Denmark, and to sponsor tit for tat intolerance, redirecting outrage over a newspaper's actions in largely Lutheran Denmark into a series of events attacking Israel, Judaism, and the Jewish people. When the leading newspaper *Hamshahri*, announced a competition for cartoonists to mock the Holocaust, on February 13, 2006, it said its intent was "to test the boundaries of free speech for Westerners."⁶⁷ (Holocaust denial is punishable by imprisonment in a number of European countries.) Both the newspaper and the cartoon center that co-sponsored the event are owned by the Tehran Municipality, which is dominated by allies of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.⁶⁸

President Ahmadinejad supported the competition, in keeping with his previous statements denying the reality of the Holocaust and calling for the destruction of Israel (in December 2006, the president sponsored an international conference of Holocaust denial in Teheran). The cartoon competition went forward in August as a major platform for antisemitism. Prizes were awarded for 12 of the some 200 entries in an event that was reported by the Iranian press, although there was "no significant coverage," according to the Associated Press.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, dissemination of many of the Holocaust cartoons over the Internet and reprinting in Western media gave international exposure to the event.

In effect, the violent response to the Danish exercise in free expression largely overwhelmed concerns in the West about the obligations of mainstream publications to show respect for minorities, even while upholding norms of free expression. In an October 2006 report on hate crimes, the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), observed that its concerns with discrimination in the region during the year were "over-shadowed by events relating to the publication of the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* and the re-publication of the caricatures in several other newspapers throughout the OSCE region." The report put the publication of the cartoons squarely in the context of a broader picture of discrimination and intolerance toward Muslims:

Although the caricatures were initially interpreted as a test of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, this explanation overlooks the specific backdrop against which *Jyllands-Posten* decided to solicit and publish the cartoons. The caricature case has underscored the increased need for dialogue between communities.⁷⁰

Statistics on Violence against Muslims

Only the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom report systematically on the annual number of incidents of violence against Muslims. Information produced on hate crimes by a number of other governments and police forces, including in Canada and France, provides a window into levels of violence toward Muslims. The overlap of the bias motivations of race and ethnicity, national origin and religion is addressed in different ways in different systems. In the United Kingdom, for example, most bias crimes targeting Muslims have until recently been considered under race hate provisions in law. The introduction of the “faith-based” bias crime category is a fairly recent innovation.

In **France**, official statistics for 2006 distinguish between antisemitic and racist and xenophobic offences and registered a 10 percent decline in hate crimes overall. Racist and xenophobic offences, which exclude those motivated by antisemitism, experienced a significant decline in total numbers, with a 27 percent reduction. (Antisemitic offences, in contrast, rose 6.6 percent overall over 2005 levels.)⁷¹

As in past reports, the National Consultative Council for Human Rights (CNCDH) continued to avoid the word minority in its reporting on hate crimes, indiscriminately substituting the term “*immigré*” to describe citizens who are the targets of “racist or xenophobic” offences. The findings identify people of North African origin (*maghrebines*) as the most affected by racist and xenophobic offenses, accounting for nearly 70 percent of the total.⁷²

Statistics for 2006 indicate just 42 violent acts of racism or xenophobia described as “*anti-maghrebines*” and 22

described as “other.”⁷³ There were 280 offences of “lesser gravity,” classified as threats, of which 192 were *anti-maghrebines*, with 88 motivated by other forms of racism or xenophobia.⁷⁴

In the **United Kingdom**, the Home Office and the Crown Prosecution Service produce national statistics on police reports and prosecutions, respectively. Additionally, an annual national victim survey carried out under the auspices of the Home Office asks participants if they or a member of their household have been the victim of a (hate) crime in the previous year. Comprehensive hate crime monitoring systems are operated by a number of independent police authorities, in particular, London’s Metropolitan Police Service.

The legal framework for the definition and registration of hate crimes in most of the United Kingdom provides for the details of bias incidents to be recorded whether or not a prosecutable offense can be identified. The victim’s or a witness’ own perception of the crime, moreover, is sufficient for incidents to be classed as bias incidents for purposes of investigation and statistical analysis. (Official guidelines note, for example, that “A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”)⁷⁵ While a higher test is required in order to prosecute an offence as a hate crime, a high priority has been placed within the criminal justice system to monitoring and combating discriminatory violence as hate crimes that is reflected in yearly statistics.

The British Home Office reported 57,902 racist incidents and 37,028 racially-aggravated offenses in 2004/2005, the latest period for which statistics are

available. This was a moderate rise over 2003/2004 levels in which there were 54,286 incidents and 34,996 registered offences.⁷⁶ In contrast, the British Crime Survey indicates that in 2003/2004 participants reported 206,000 “race and faith-based” hate crimes. The figure dropped to 179,000 in the year 2004/2005 resulting in a 13 percent decrease.

Statistics produced by the Metropolitan Police Service on “faith-based” hate crimes in London reveal that 692 such hate crimes were registered in the year 2004/2005, while the figure increased to 1,103 in 2005/2006. The figures, however, include hate crimes perpetrated against members of other faiths, although the large majority of victims are Muslims, those suspected to be Muslims, or their property.⁷⁷

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecuted 4,660 defendants for racially-aggravated offences in England and Wales in 2004/05, up 29.7 per cent from the previous year, although relatively few were religiously-aggravated hate crimes. The CPS reports that the number of religiously-aggravated cases dropped to 34 in 2004/2005 from 49 the year before, but in 67 per cent of these cases the victim was Muslim. The majority of the reported racist incidents included assaults, criminal damage, or public order offences. There were four murders.⁷⁸

The statistics reported by the police and CPS do not reflect the extent of the actual number of hate crimes in the U.K. Even in London, where the Crown Prosecution Service and the Metropolitan Police are actively involved in combating hate crimes, problems with the reporting of hate incidents persist. The community-based non-governmental organization the Monitoring Group, for example, has noted the difficulty of consistent reporting on bias incidents as in part a consequence of multiple bias motivations. Other reasons for the failure to report are the fact that victims complain of lack of understanding from the police, argue that the police did not take low-level harassment seriously, are afraid of reprisal, and fear going to court.⁷⁹

The nature of bias in hate crime may be represented in different ways particularly if double discrimination has been in play. The Monitoring Group told us, for example, that attacks on Muslims are often registered *either* as religiously-motivated or as racist attacks, depending in part on what the victim says immediately after the attack. An attack on a Pakistani Muslim, for example, may be registered as a racial attack rather than a religious attack, depending upon the victim’s view of the primary basis for the attack. Muslims often belong to two minority categories – racial and religious – and thus the registering of such incidents by police

may hide the reality of violence on the ground. The Hindu and Sikh communities in London, for example, are concerned that the tabulation of hate incidents does not accurately reflect the full level of religiously-motivated crimes.

Anti-Muslim violence was also reported in North America. In **Canada**, detailed statistics on hate crimes are maintained by several metropolitan police authorities, and a federal anti-discrimination plan has been adopted that is eventually to provide for national hate crime statistic collection.

The Toronto Police Service, for example, releases hate crime statistics on an annual basis. In 2006, 162 total hate/bias crimes were reported in Toronto, representing a 23% increase from the 132 incidents reported in 2005. Fifteen of the 162 hate crimes in Toronto were categorized anti-Muslim, while 13 separate offences were tabulated as anti-Pakistani. Fifteen cases were described as “multi-bias” offences, where offenders were motivated by more than one animus: these included 2 offences described as anti-Sunni.⁸⁰ The number of anti-Muslim offences increased in 2006 over 2005 levels, when just 3 of the 132 hate crimes tabulated by the Hate Crimes Unit were classified as anti-Muslim, and 7 were classified as anti-Pakistani.⁸¹

In the **United States**, the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports program produces a yearly report on the number of incidents, offenses, victims, and known offenders under a wide range of bias categories. In 2005, 128 anti-Islamic incidents were recorded, with 146 offenses, 151 victims, and 89 known offenders. Incidents are only recorded by participating police jurisdictions if they are considered to constitute a specific offense.⁸²

Reporting by Nongovernmental Organizations

Reporting on incidents and offences by nongovernmental groups provides some information on the nature and extent of violence against Muslims, compensating in part for the absence or incomplete nature of official data. In the United States, local and national organizations, like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) are tabulating hate incidents against the Muslim community.

In its annual report on anti-Muslim incidents, released in September 2006, CAIR reported an almost 30 percent increase in the total number of complaints of anti-Muslim bias from 2004 to 2005. CAIR reported 1,972 incidents of anti-Muslim violence, discrimination, and harassment in 2005, a rise of 26 percent over the

1,522 cases reported in 2004 using the same methodology.⁸³ These included 153 reports of anti-Muslim hate crimes, an 8.6 percent increase from the 141 complaints received in 2004. CAIR legal director Arsalan Iftikhar said the biggest factor underlying the increase was believed to be “the growth in Islamophobic rhetoric that has flooded the Internet and talk radio in the post-9/11 era.” Other factors in the rise included the continuing impact of fears generated by the September 11 attacks, as well as “increased awareness of civil rights issues in the Muslim community.”⁸⁴

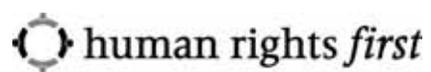
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Headquarters

333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001-5108

Tel.: 212.845.5263
Fax: 212.845.5299

www.humanrightsfirst.org

Washington D.C. Office

100 Maryland Avenue, NE
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002-5625

Tel: 202.547.5692
Fax: 202.543.5999