Increasing Islamophobia In Western Society

Islamophobia (meaning "fear of Islam"), which remerged in Western societies mostly after the 9/11 attacks, has begun escalating with the recent acts of violence carried out by ISIL in the Middle East in the second half of 2014.

German Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, presented a report on "...the acts of violence committed in the name of religion throughout the world" to the UN Council of Human Rights. At the press conference in the U.N.'s Geneva Office on March 10th, 2015, he warned "Islamophobia is showing an increasing tendency in Europe."

Attacks Aimed At Muslims in European Countries Have Reached A Disturbing Dimension

This increase in Islamophobia runs parallel to the increase in the attacks and act of violence against Muslims. Since the second half of last year, Muslims have been

subjected to serious attacks in seven different countries in Europe especially Germany, Sweden and Austria. Surveys conducted in Austria and Germany show that the Muslims who live in these countries have been exposed to verbal and physical attacks and two out of three Muslims have been subjected to anti-Muslim prejudice at least once in their lives. According to the survey, the ratio of Muslims who were subjected to verbal and physical attacks in the last year was 72.3% in Austria and 63.8% in Germany.

Recently, attacks aimed at mosques and places of worship in Europe have become almost epidemic. Several attacks and disturbances aimed at 39 different mosques were reported. Pig heads and internal organs were left at mosque doors, Muslim communities were attacked with knifes and copies of the Holy Koran were burned. Three mosques were vandalized in Sweden in a single week.

Recent public opinion polls in France indicate there were twice as many attacks against Muslims compared to the previous year. In France, where nearly five million Muslims live, most of which Northern Africans, there has been a rise in the number of physical attacks and harassment against Islamic places of worship and graveyards. Quite recently, in the city of Toulouse of France, it was reported that an assailant threw a Muslim woman to the ground after pulling her headscarf off and punching her.

We can easily see similar attacks and harassment in many European countries.

Discrimination Against Muslims Increasing Day By Day

  In European countries, Islamophobia manifests itself as ruthless discrimination against Muslims as well as physical attacks and harassment. On the British website called "Stop the War Coalition", while the rise of Islamophobia in the West is described in detail with statistics, research published on the website as, "*Ten reasons why we can't ignore Islamophobia and the war on terror*", addresses official and civil discrimination against Muslims using examples and data.

"In England, discrimination against Muslims worsens every day. While the general unemployment rate is 8% in England, the rate among Muslims is 17%. This rate is higher than the rate among those of different faiths… The unemployment rate is only 14 percent for white people. More than 40 percent of British Muslims of Pakistan or Bangladesh origin live in poverty. In England approximately 45% of South Asian Muslim children are in the clutches of poverty.

… Discrimination against Muslims is much greater in France than in England. Almost 60 percent of the population of prisons in France is Muslim. Despite claims of secularity, hundreds of Catholic churches are financed by the French state. Hundreds of Catholic schools and many Jewish special colleges receive government aid. Muslim organizations also made demands for similar regulations but they were refused…

In England, more than one thousand Muslims were taken into custody within the scope of anti-terror laws without being charged with any crimes. Islamophobic

precautions and statements are increasing in the name of the "struggle against terrorism." (*http://stopwar.org.uk/news/10-reasons-why-we-can-t-ignore-islamophobia-and-the-war-on-terror*)

The Role of the Media and Radical Right Outbursts In the Rise of Islamophobia Recent Western media clichés reflecting the violent criminal acts perpetrated by ISIS in the name of Islam as being part and parcel of the religion of Islam have contributed greatly to the rise of Islamophobia, so much so that even an ordinary Muslim minding his own business could be considered a potential ISIS or al-Qaeda member in hiding.

On the other hand, the recent rise of extreme-right populist parties and governments in Europe that have given priority to anti-Muslim statements in their political campaigns have also fanned the flames of Islamophobia.

However, it is pointless to blame the ordinary European citizen for such things despite the fact that they are exposed to severe anti-Islam suggestions and thus feel a good deal of apprehension toward Muslims. Yet there are far-right or fanatical organizations responsible for these provocative actions; not only physical attacks and vandalizing mosques but also indecent slanders and caricatures targeting Muslims are part of these incitements.

The statements of Geert Wilders, leader of the extreme-right populist party, The Party for Freedom (PVV), that "the religion of Islam" is responsible for the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris – where 12 people lost their lives – and that "jihadists have waged war on us" are an example to how the radical right feeds these provocations.

The purpose of these provocations is to pour Muslims into the streets, to encourage violence, and ultimately to provoke retaliation with an attempt to intertwine "Muslims and violence" and "Muslims and terror". The ultimate goal is, of course, to pressure Muslims, to limit their rights, to erase their presence from social and economic life and finally to force them to migrate, thanks to an environment shaped by this highly fueled concept of Islamophobia.

It is clear that the harassment, attacks and discrimination currently aimed at Muslims has nothing to do with conscience, justice, human rights, democracy or even basic rights and freedoms. This Western attitude targeting Muslims must be rectified at once and the same level of sensitivity must be applied for Muslims in areas such as democracy, equality, freedom of thought and human rights without any discrimination whatsoever.

That being said, it is also the responsibility of Muslims to eliminate this perception of Islamophobia that has emerged as a prejudice in Western societies and to replace it with the true perception of Islam. This can only be realized if Muslims abandon the bigoted understanding of religion that has no relation to the teachings of the Koran and they must set an example for the societies they live in with the high moral values of the Koran.

Adnan Oktar's piece on Diplomacy Pakistan:

http://www.diplomacypakistan.com/articles/increasing-islamophobia-in-western-society/

https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/increasing-islamophobia-in-western-society