



PRESS RELEASE

Gendered Islamophobia flourishing in a climate of bystander inaction

21 March 2023

The Islamophobia Register Australia's ('Register') flagship research report released today highlights the gendered nature of Islamophobia and that alarmingly, despite the prevalence of Islamophobia in public places, comprising 'hotspots', bystanders witnessing incidents do not appear to be intervening to support victims.

In partnership with Charles Sturt University (CSU) and Islamic Science and Research Academy (ISRA), the Register has released its fourth Islamophobia in Australia report authored by the Register's Principal Researcher and CSU Associate Professor Dr Derya Iner.

Islamophobic incidents were mostly committed by men perceived to be from Anglo/European backgrounds and from older cohorts. The victims were mostly younger hijabi women from non-White ethnic backgrounds and from vulnerable cohorts, unaccompanied or with children. These are the most significant characteristics of Islamophobia we keep seeing over the course of eight years in the reported incidents of Islamophobia in Australia. Incidents in guarded places continue to increase (reaching up 70% in the last reporting period). If we don't want to keep repeating these numbers in the next 8 years, it is time to ask ourselves "What can we do to stop it?" and "How can we dismantle gender, race and age enablers reproducing Islamophobia?"

Dr Derya Iner Principal Researcher & CSU Associate Professor

"It's clear from this report that there is an urgent need to activate bystanders, both in the real world and online. What's also troubling is that this report reinforces the fact that Islamophobia disproportionately affects Muslim women. We need government action to ensure greater safeguards for Muslims in Australia."

Sharara Attai, Executive Director, Islamophobia Register Australia

Scope of Report

The fourth Islamophobia in Australia report covers the 2020-2021 reporting period, but also goes beyond that by compiling all incident data from the inception of the Register in September 2014 until December 2021 – 930 verified incidents (515 offline and 415 online). In this way, this fourth report is particularly significant because it demonstrates how Islamophobia has manifested in Australia over time.

Some Key Statistics

As with the three previous reports, this report again reinforced the gendered nature of Islamophobia. Most victims were women (78%) and most perpetrators were men (70%). Two in three women were harassed by male perpetrators.

The report also highlights a concerning fall in witness reporting which dropped by about half (from 47% to 24%) since the inception of the Register (2014-15) until the start of the COVID-19 era (2020- 21).

In online circumstances, it was found that three quarters (75%) of reporters in the period of 2014- 21 were Muslim. The ratio of non-Muslim reporters dropped significantly (from 35% in 2014-15 to 2% in 2020-21).



Over the 8 year period, verbal intimidation was the most common form of abuse (45%), followed by graffiti and vandalism (12%) and discrimination by authorities in official buildings, workplaces, schools (10%) written material (9%), physical assault (8%), multiple incident types in one case (8%), non-verbal intimidation (6%) and other (2%).

The unique circumstances of the COVID-19 reporting period are also discussed in detail in the report.

Interactive map

With the release of the fourth report, the Register launches an innovative interactive map on Islamophobia in Australia (available on www.islamophobia.com.au) created by the Spatial Data Analysis Network and Charles Sturt University. It shows incidents reported to the Register between 2014 until 2021. This visual tool helps identify hotspots as well as common incident types.

Responses to the Report

Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, who has previously spoken of her own experiences of Islamophobia, has responded to the findings of this report by calling on the government to commit to concrete steps to combat Islamophobia:

“The extent of racism and hatred that Muslims in Australia face remains deeply concerning. For too long, Muslim women and children have borne the brunt of Islamophobia, often suffering long-term emotional harm.

The previous Coalition Government fuelled Islamophobia then sat back and did nothing while Muslims in Australia were abused and attacked over the past nine years. The Labor government must commit to concrete responses to combat Islamophobia.”

Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens

Senator Fatima Payman, who is the first hijab wearing Senator in Australia, labelled the report confronting:

“The fourth Islamophobia in Australia report is confronting, with 930 verified incidents being analysed, however, I am optimistic this data will help our nation fight against this discrimination. I encourage anyone who experiences Islamophobia to take a stand and report the incident.”

Senator Fatima Payman

About the Islamophobia Register Australia

The Register is a not-for-profit organisation that has been leading the tracking and tackling of Islamophobia across Australia since its launch in 2014. It provides a secure and reliable online reporting platform that captures nation-wide data and offers first-hand support to victims of Islamophobia. Having recently expanded its board and appointed an inaugural Executive Director, the Register has grown its operations to take its work and influence to the next level.

Its operating model has been commended and replicated by multiple other marginalised groups who have approached the Register to support them in the establishment of their own reporting models. This includes the First Nations Racism Register, ‘Call it Out’ founded by the National Justice Project and the Jumbunna Institute. The Register was also recently invited to provide evidence at the Disability Royal Commission who are looking to make formal recommendations to create a similar organisation to track and tackle disability hate

Media Enquiries

For media enquiries please contact us here:
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