



ISLAMOPHOBIA
REGISTER
AUSTRALIA



PRESS RELEASE

Islamophobic response to unfolding Senator Fatima Payman story

FRIDAY 5 JULY, SYDNEY, Australia

Warning - threats of gender-based violence below

Amid the recent media spotlight on Senator Fatima Payman, we have observed and received a number of incident reports highlighting a concerning pattern of Islamophobia from politicians and the public.

It was reported that political colleagues were “expressing concern” and “alarmed” that Senator Payman believed the future was “absolutely in God’s hands”, and Labor colleagues shared with media Payman’s private comments of “seeking guidance from God”. At the same time, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton, when speculating on the next term of the Labor government, said “...it will include Muslim candidates from Western Sydney. It will be a disaster”.

Executive Director of Islamophobia Register Australia Dr Nora Amath said: “The scornful and alarmist tone of the comments by Payman’s former colleagues referencing ‘God’ can be seen as mocking an Australian Muslim woman’s faith, and seem particularly pointed at her Islamic religion, given Parliament begins each day of sitting with the Lord’s Prayer.”

“Meanwhile Dutton’s statement implies Muslim political representation is itself a catastrophe. This type of commentary inevitably fuels Islamophobia and licenses hate speech and discriminatory attitudes by positioning Muslims engaging in the Australian political process as inherently dangerous.”

When asked about Senator Payman and faith-based political movements, Senator Claire Chandler said on Sky News:

“I’m a little concerned by the rise of the potential Muslim voices movement or Muslim teal movement. I would certainly be interested to see...exactly how faith-based it is or based in ethnicity it is. It’s not something that we have seen in Australia before. I am someone who thinks our political system is served quite well by having good separation of Church and State...I’ll be looking very closely as I’m sure my colleagues will. It’s concerning...to hear these reports”

Dr Amath said “Senator Claire Chandler’s concern can only be referring to the Muslim-ness of this new “movement”, given the Australian Christian Party was formed in 2011, the Australian Christian Lobby was started in 1996, and the Australian Jewish Democratic Society was formed in 1984. This inconsistent attitude suggests only Muslim political movements are a problem, supporting the Islamophobic idea that Muslims engaging in the Australian political process is concerning.”



The Register has received several incident reports related to the Australian Jewish Association (AJA) who have once again made blatantly Islamophobic and racist remarks that exacerbate tensions between communities and reflect the worst stereotypes of Muslims, saying in a public statement to their Instagram account about Senator Payman:

“We have a few constructive suggestions:

- 1. There are some openings now available in the governance of Hamas.*
- 2. There may be lots of vacancies in the governance of Hezbollah very soon.*
- 3. She could go back to Afghanistan to help the Taliban with human rights challenges.*
- 4. She might await the formation of an “Australian Muslim Party” and hold the Australian government to ransom”*

The AJA have a track record of making Islamophobic remarks and feature heavily (around 40 incidents and counting) amongst the Register’s recorded incidents.

In another incident reported to the Register, Senator Payman received a letter demanding that she *“leaves Australia and go back to your [her] ancestral homes, your [sic] racist genocidal comments make you an enemy of the people and that you do not have goodness, but evil in your heart.”*

Senator Payman’s office also received a newspaper photo clipping, with the graffitied words: *“Be aware. We are after you/family and maidens. You stupid Muslim bitch.”*

Another Islamophobic and violent letter to Senator Payman shared with the Register stated: *“Piss off to where you’ve come from. All you Muslims here stain us. It would give me the greatest pleasure to be able to rip that stupid head scarf off.....How would you like a bullet fired up your vagina ...it is long overdue that the Australian people took a stance against you Muslims in Australia. You breed like flies, most don’t speak our language or respect our way or laws, mostly live in filth and dress like zombies.”*

Maha Abdo OAM, CEO of Muslim Women Australia said: *“Every individual has a right to feel safe in private in public spaces. MWA has worked with people experiencing gendered violence for more than 40 years, and the intersection between gendered violence and Islamophobia is real and ever present. We are all too familiar with the impacts on the victims and broader society, and without the appropriate support, these impacts last a lifetime and have detrimental effects on lives and wellbeing.*

When we examine the intersections between gendered violence and Islamophobia we uncover disturbing similarities in the mechanisms of power, control, and domination. In both realms, the primary objective is to uphold authority and maintain control over individuals and communities”.

All these reported incidents come at a time of an unprecedented surge in Islamophobia around the country since 7 October last year. The Register has documented an increase of 581% since 7th October 2023.

The Register is deeply concerned that the current tone of political commentary and public discussion risks inflaming and fuelling islamophobia. Executive Director of Islamophobia Register Australia Dr Nora Amath said *“We call on political leaders to be conscious of their words and take a firm stand against Islamophobia. It is only through collective effort and vigilance that we can hope to create a more inclusive and respectful society.”*

Image 1 AJA social media post
Image 2 Fatima Payman article



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About the Islamophobia Register Australia

[Islamophobia Register Australia](https://www.islamophobia.com.au) 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

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