



## **Resolution to Condemn and Combat Islamophobia**

WHEREAS, white supremacists in the United States have historically exploited and continue to exploit bigotry and weaponize hate for political gain, targeting traditionally persecuted peoples, including African Americans, Arab Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans Pacific Islanders, and other people of color, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and other protected classes with verbal attacks, incitement, and violence; and

WHEREAS, over the course of the last two decades, the Muslim American community has experienced periods of deep anti-Muslim hate - first in the post 9/11 era, then in the Trump era and now in the aftermath of October 7th, 2023.

WHEREAS, particularly in the post-9/11 era, harassment and discrimination as a result of Islamophobia on the basis of actual or perceived national origin, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics with a religious group remains a persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in contemporary American society and fundamentally contradicts the values of our Princeton community; and

WHEREAS, according to research conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) between 2016 and 2022:

- 1) Islamophobia is pervasive, systemic, and a threat to all;
- 2) Anti-Muslim discrimination has been sustained at high levels for many years with the majority (62%) of Muslim adults experiencing it each year;
- 3) Interpersonal discrimination experienced by Muslims is common and pervasive with 43% of Muslims reporting having experienced it when interacting with co-workers 56% experiencing it with others on social media. Children are not immune; nearly half of Muslim families with school-age children have at least one child who has experienced religious-based bullying. Alarming, 20% of Muslim families report that bullying happens nearly every day. Four in ten Muslim families with a child who has experienced bullying (42%) say the bully was a teacher or school official at school, and roughly one in five say the bully was a teacher or school official online (19%). These findings shed light on cyberbullying as a major issue Muslim families face;
- 4) Islamophobia is institutionalized. What is unique to Muslims is the level of institutionalized and systemic Islamophobia they experience, which takes many forms:
  - a) Banking: 27% of Muslims have reported facing banking challenges, including being denied opening an account, having an account suspended or closed, or having payments made placed under investigation. These challenges are not simply limited to personal accounts but also experienced by nonprofits and businesses;
  - b) Places of worship: In the past decade (2010-2019), 35% of mosques encountered significant resistance from their neighborhood or city when they tried



to obtain permission to move, expand, or build. This increased from 25% between 1980-2009;

- c) Political participation: In 2020, Emgage turned out over 1 million Muslim voters; however, Muslims are more than twice as likely as the general public to face obstacles to voting. This includes one-quarter of Muslims eligible to vote faced long wait times when casting a ballot in the past four years, more than any other obstacle cited. As well as nearby polling stations shut down (15%), cumbersome voter ID requirements (14%), language barriers causing difficulty understanding ballot choices (13%), and facing intimidation (12%).
  - d) Healthcare and employment: Among Muslims who have experienced discrimination in the past year, a significant number experienced it when applying for a job (37% vs. 6% of the general public) and when receiving healthcare (27% vs. 8% of the general public);
  - e) Social media: Nearly half of Muslims (46% versus 36% for the general public) report facing discrimination from social media platforms themselves, which included having messages removed, accounts closed, or being kicked off a platform;
  - f) Airports/travel: Muslims are twice as likely as the general public to face secondary screening when entering the United States (30% vs. 12%). This is especially true for those who wear a visible symbol of their faith, for example the hijab or women who observe the headscarf;
  - g) Legal system: More than one-third of Muslims report experiencing high levels of discrimination when interacting with law enforcement. Additionally, in instances of ideologically motivated violence, accused Muslim-perceived defendants face far greater legal consequences than their non-Muslim-perceived (white supremacist or anti-government) counterparts accused of a similar crime or plot, and receive more media coverage and public communication from the Department Of Justice;
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- 5) Islamophobia is a threat to democracy. Those who harbor anti-Muslim sentiments are more likely to approve of discriminatory policies targeting Muslims and agree to limit democratic freedoms when the country is under threat;
  - 6) Islamophobia is but a “branch on the tree of -isms,” with the same roots, empirically linked to antisemitism, anti-Black racism, and xenophobia;
  - 7) Harms of Islamophobia are not confined to Muslims but also those perceived to be Muslim;
  - 8) Institutionalized Islamophobia can contribute to interpersonal Islamophobia, signaling acceptance from the top down;
  - 9) Manifestations of Islamophobia hinder individual potential and community development among Muslims; and
  - 10) ISPU surveys show that American Muslims are the most ethnically diverse faith group in the country, with a plurality (28%) identifying as Black or African American. Muslims who are Black experience the same systemic racism that all Black Americans face in their day-to-day lives, in addition to the religious discrimination faced by many Americans who



are Muslim. In ISPU's 2018 American Muslim Poll, 66% of Muslims who identify as Black or African American and 75% of Black Americans in the general public reported experiencing racial discrimination.

WHEREAS data shows that Muslims are among the most likely of all minority groups to be victimized by incidents of hate, and such incidents are increasing at an alarming rate. Attacks on persons who are Muslim or perceived to be Muslim have grown significantly since September 11, 2001. According to the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) from 2014 to 2019, there were 10,015 anti-Muslim bias incidents, which included 1,164 anti-Muslim hate crimes; and

WHEREAS, this rise in Islamophobic sentiment is widely acknowledged by the American people, as a 2019 study by Pew found that most American adults (82%) say that Muslims are subject to at least some discrimination in the United States today; and

WHEREAS, according to the FBI, approximately 19% of religion-based incidents from 2015-2019 were against Muslims, who make up only about 1% of the United States population. Furthermore, the United States Attorney General has commented that since September 11, 2001, the Justice Department has led more than 1,000 investigations into "anti-Muslim hatred" acts and bigoted behavior that have led to more than 45 prosecutions; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2017 Pew Poll, while perceptions of religious groups improved overall in 2017, Muslims rated most negatively of all religious groups, scoring a 48 out of 100.

WHEREAS, data from CAIR also shows that the State of New Jersey ranked amongst the highest of states in the nation in Islamophobic incidents in 2020. New Jersey ranked among the top 10 states for anti-mosque incidents according to the ACLU, including multiple incidents against Muslim persons and Muslim institutions; and

WHEREAS, Islamophobia violates the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans of all backgrounds together; and

WHEREAS, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and ethnicity is unlawful under state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, we are all harmed when any one member of the Princeton community is subjected to hate or discrimination on the basis of an actual or perceived part of their identity; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Princeton is committed to cultivating an inclusive, pluralistic community that embraces diversity and to ending the spread of hate, bigotry, and harassment based on race, color, creed, caste, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic as defined by law; and



WHEREAS, it is racist to essentialize (treat a character trait as inherent) or to make sweeping negative generalizations about a given population. What is true of racism in general is true of Islamophobia in particular; and

WHEREAS, what is particular in classic Islamophobia is the idea that Muslims are linked to terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Islamophobia can be manifested in words, visual images, and deeds. Examples of Islamophobic words include utterances that “All Muslims are terrorists” and that “Shariah or the Islamic way of life is a threat to American society”; and

WHEREAS, instituting a standard definition of Islamophobia will provide an essential definitional tool to determine manifestations of Islamophobia. In addition to Islamophobia, the terms “intolerance against Muslims,” “anti-Muslim prejudice,” “anti-Muslim hate,” “anti-Muslim racism,” “hatred of Muslims,” “anti-Islamism,” “Muslimophobia,” and “racism towards Muslims” may also be used to define the same characteristics of Islamophobia; and

WHEREAS, awareness of this definition of Islamophobia will increase understanding of the parameters of anti-Muslim harassment and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this resolution, “Islamophobia” means a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness, which may be expressed as hatred toward Muslim persons, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) hatred or severe disparagement towards Muslim persons or their culture;
- (2) hostility and fear of Islam, and as a result, a fear of and aversion to all Muslims or the majority of Muslims;
- (3) discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and unequal treatment of Muslim persons or Muslim-majority communities;
- (4) exclusion of Muslim persons or Muslim-majority communities from major political and social spheres;
- (5) making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims, or of Muslims as a collective group, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslims entry into politics, government, or other societal institutions, the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic threat posed by Muslims or of a Muslim takeover;
- (6) rhetorical, violent, or physical anti-Muslim manifestations directed against Muslim or non-Muslim individuals, or their property, or Muslim community institutions and religious facilities;
- (7) shouting, verbal or physical abuse, pushing, spitting, pulling hijabs from Muslim women, and other forms of prejudicial abuses that target Muslims;
- (8) calling for, aiding, encouraging, supporting, or justifying the killing, harming, or defaming of anyone simply for practicing Islam or exhibiting a Muslim identity or heritage;



(9) expressing an outlook or worldview involving an unfounded dread and dislike of Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion and discrimination;

(10) accusing those practicing Islam, or exhibiting a Muslim identity or heritage, whether singularly or collectively, as being wholly responsible for any real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person, group, or any Muslim-majority country;

(11) accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to a transnational Muslim community or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of the people of New Jersey or the interests of the people of the United States;

(13) accusing those practicing Islam, or exhibiting a Muslim identity or heritage, whether singularly or collectively, as being more loyal to any foreign Muslim-majority country or the alleged priorities of Muslim persons worldwide than to the interests of the people of the State of New Jersey, or to the interests of the people of the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this XYZ day of MONTH, 2023 by the Mayor and Council of Princeton, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey adopt this definition of Islamophobia and denounce and condemn Islamophobia, discrimination, racism, hate, and violence in all of its manifestations and stand in solidarity with our Muslim community members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Municipality will ensure that information on Islamophobia will be made available as educational resources for all local public agencies, institutions, and organizations responsible for addressing Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination.

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED, the Municipality will encourage local organizations, committees and commissions, such as the Princeton Civil Rights Commission, to host community education programming that fosters open and inclusive dialogue on Islamophobic discrimination, convenes members of the community to build connections on the issue of Islamophobic discrimination, and identifies how community stakeholders can collectively address Islamophobic incidents and ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals threatened by hate including the empowerment of Muslims by supporting their right to freedom of speech which is imperative to confront prejudiced and dehumanizing media narratives that invite hatred.

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED, the Mayor and Council affirm the Municipality's commitment to cultivating an inclusive, safe, and just society and culture that values the diversity of our community, works to ensure equitable opportunities in all major facets of society and celebrates both our individuality and commonality.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Mayor and Council urge Princeton residents to join us by adopting these values in their own lives, calling attention to these harms, and denouncing Islamophobia, anti-Muslim racism, and hate to help keep us all safe.

We direct the Municipal Clerk to send a copy of this resolution, duly adopted, to [Name of County] County Commissioners [Names of County Commissioners], [Names of state



Assemblymen/women, Senators and Governor], [Name of Congressional Representatives and Senators], Vice President Kamala Harris, and President Joseph Biden.

Motion \_\_\_\_\_ Second \_\_\_\_\_

RESOURCES: <https://www.ispu.org/institutional-islamophobia/>