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In the name of Allah,
most Gracious, most Merciful

عيد مبارك

Eid Mubarak!



Insha Allah, Eid ul-Fitr will fall at the beginning of May (subject to confirmation). All of us at *Rocket Science* and the Mount Albert Islamic Trust wish all our readers "Eid Mubarak!" May Allah (swt) grant you the rewards for your fasting and your extra devotional activities during this special month, and may He help us to continue in the heightened sense of iman once Ramadan is over.

And don't forget the rewards for fasting any six days in Shawwal (except Eid ul-Fitr). Abu Ayub (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Whoever fasts Ramadan and follows it with six days of Shawwal, it will be as if he fasted *dahr* (the whole year or possibly forever)." (Narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nisaa'i and Ibn Maajah)

123456 The virtue of fasting
six days of Shawwaal

Post-Ramadan self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a great practice for self-improvement. After any important training, wise people reflect on and evaluate their duties, efforts, success, failure, obstacles, achievement and so on. The aim for evaluation is to spot the weaknesses and strengths, so that one can work on the weaknesses for improvement in the future.

The month of Ramadan is a divine training. It involves different duties to learn different things and to learn overall self-control, to be a better servant of Allah (swt).

A Muslim should evaluate his or her achievement in the month of Ramadan to spot the weak and strong areas in terms of self-control, righteousness and piety.

Importance of self-evaluation

A blind person does not see where he is going. That's why a blind person may lose his way. On the other hand, a person with sight can see where he is going, and whether he is going off track, or following the right path, going to reach the destination as desired, etc.

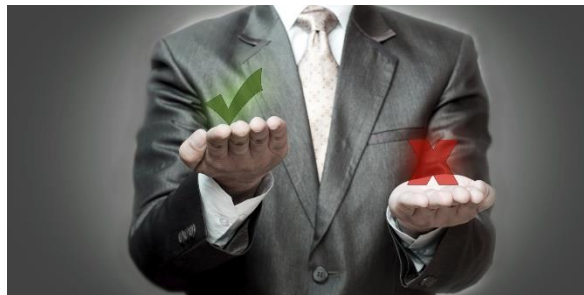
A self-evaluator is like a person with sight. He focuses on his goal and evaluates his journey carefully to see how well he is travelling towards his destination. In self-

evaluation, he can spot any error or shortcomings, and can quickly fix it before it is too late to be able to achieve the success.

The month of Ramadan is a divine training for achieving taqwa (righteousness from being God fearing). This training is part of the greater training in life to pass the test to achieve Paradise. In the life test, wise believers need self-evaluation daily to see what they are achieving and what they are failing in, in terms of earning rewards or penalties for good or bad deeds.

Allah (swt) calls the believers for doing self-evaluation in the Holy Quran (59.18): "O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look to what it has put forward for the future."

This verse emphasises the importance of self-evaluation for every believer. We should all evaluate our level of taqwa, the number of good deeds and bad deeds done every day, to measure our score of failure or success. If we find we are lacking, then we can try to make up for the shortfall in order to succeed. Allah (swt) really wants His beloved believers to succeed only.



What to self-evaluate after Ramadan?

To get the answer, we should go back to the purpose of Ramadan. The self-evaluation must be around the purpose of it. For example, if our purpose of eating is getting nutrition, then after eating we should check the nutritional level, to see whether we have achieved it or not. Similarly, after Ramadan we evaluate whether we achieved the purpose of fasting or not.

The Quran (2:183) cites Allah's command on fasting and it explains the purpose of fasting as well: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you that you may (learn) taqwa (self-control)."

So the purpose of fasting is to learn self-control, to do good deeds, and to avoid sinful deeds, from the fear of Allah's punishment. Self-evaluation should be done around this taqwa. So the obvious questions in self-evaluation should include:

- Have I achieved fear of Allah's punishment in my heart after the completion of Ramadan?
- Have I managed to surrender my desires, cravings, lust and so on to the will of Allah (swt), after the completion of a month-long training?
- Have I got full self-control over myself, to avoid all sinful actions?
- Have I got enough self-control to change my bad character to good character?
- Have I become a nice-mannered person after the month-long training?
- Have I controlled my anger after the month-long training?
- Have I learnt the regular habit of eating only halal food and drinking halal drinks?
- Have I learnt to earn only halal income after my training course?
- Have I learnt patience from the fasting month?
- Have I learnt to be kind and compassionate to hungry people, and towards mankind in general, after practising hunger for a month?
- Have I given up lying?
- Have I become regular in my five daily prayers (salat) after the month-long practice of performing extra salat at night?
- Have I become a better person in general?
- Have I learnt to be a person responsible for my actions?
- How much peace have I earned from my spiritual training, to feel for myself and to spread it around others around me?



Honourable self-correction

Self-evaluation is an honourable method to correct oneself. Nobody wants to be criticised, or judged, or told off by others. Self-evaluation saves one from being judged by others. Allah (swt) has set up a powerful court in every human. That court is called "consciousness". Believers should use that internal court for self-evaluation. Allah has honoured them with it and they should honour themselves by using it privately in dignity.

With self-evaluation, believers will find out their level of taqwa (self-control), will find out how much self-control they have achieved from the training in Ramadan. If they have achieved high levels of taqwa, they can thank Allah for

that and can make an effort to maintain that level of taqwa until another Ramadan comes round. But if they have achieved low levels of taqwa, then they can repent, and work hard throughout the year to increase their level.

Conclusion

Self-evaluation has no loss at all. It does not cost anything, nor take a long time, nor bring any disgrace. Self-evaluation makes us wiser, self-conscious, more and more mature, and gives us the opportunity to repent and to correct. Overall it helps us to navigate our divine journey towards Paradise. May Allah guide us to evaluate our level of self-control for our own good in this life and in the next life, ameen.



Review your performance during Ramadan, just like in business

The terms *anti-Semitism* and *holocaust*

In the March 2022 issue of *Rocket Science*¹, we noted the declarations by three global human rights organisations – Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories) – that Israel should be considered a similar apartheid state to the former situation in South Africa.

In the February 2022 issue², we noted the passing of Bishop Desmond Tutu. He was a South African Anglican bishop, but was perhaps best-known around the world for his work as an anti-apartheid and human rights activist. This activism related to his homeland of South Africa. However, he also saw clear parallels between the apartheid against the blacks in South Africa, and the apartheid against the Palestinians. It was also noted that *The Guardian* newspaper, in its obituary for Tutu, had censored any mention of his support for the Palestinian struggle against apartheid.

Two terms are regularly used in counterarguments against the apartheid situation in Israel: *anti-Semitism* and *holocaust*.

Developments in Australia

The Australasian Muslim Times³ (AMUST) reports the efforts of Shaoquett Moselmane to stand up

for Palestinian rights. He is a Lebanese-born member of the New South Wales Legislative Council and the parliamentary Australian Labor Party.

The Reverend Fred Nile⁴ is also a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council, as well as an ordained Christian minister. On 23 March, he moved a motion to the NSW parliament to endorse the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism. The motion was passed.

Shaoquett Moselmane spoke against the motion: “[The definition of anti-Semitism] is a political tool being used to deflect criticism of Israel as an apartheid state, which for the past 70 years has subjugated, oppressed and dehumanised the Palestinian people. Palestinians are made to walk on separate footpaths, drive on separate roads, eat in separate eateries and wait in long lines at checkpoints on their way home from work or on their way to work, and the sole aim is to denigrate and humiliate them into submission. The incarceration of young men and women, and children as young as eight being subjected to police or military questioning, is not a democratic practice. It is clearly nothing else but apartheid.”⁵



Shaoquett Moselmane

The IHRA definition

A year ago, Al Jazeera⁶ reported on the IHRA definition: "At a May 2016 meeting in Bucharest, the IHRA's decision-making body, then representing 31 countries, adopted a document that included two separate sections.

"The first section is a two-sentence definition of anti-Semitism: 'Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'"

Note that this part of the definition talks about Jews as a racial group, just as Arabs are a racial group. This does not mean that all Jews or Arabs are homogeneous; there are clearly differences depending on their nationalities, histories, etc. However, in terms of racial heritage, they are racial groups.

The second section of the IHRA definition contains 11 examples of potentially anti-Semitic statements

or behaviour. However, seven of these examples contain references to the Israeli state. "One controversial example claims it may be considered anti-Semitic to describe Israel as a 'racist endeavour', while another claims it could be considered anti-Semitic to 'apply double standards' to Israel."⁶

That is, the definition has now changed from Jews as a racial group, to Israel as a political state. After heated debate, the IHRA meeting only adopted the two-sentence definition, and not the examples. However, pro-Israel lobbies argued for the examples to be included, and in May 2018 the IHRA's Committee on Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial stated that "the definition and the examples constituted the full definition, and that the subject was not open to further discussion"⁶.

This conflation of hatred against Jews with criticism of Israel has been criticised by many prominent figures. "Some critics of Israel or Israeli policies, including Ralph Nader, Jenny Tonge, Noam Chomsky, and Desmond Tutu suggest that equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism is inappropriate or inaccurate. Other critics, such as John Mearsheimer, Alexander Cockburn, Norman Finkelstein, and William I. Robinson, claim that supporters of Israel sometimes equate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism in a deliberate attempt to prevent legitimate criticism of Israel and discredit critics"⁷. Some of these critics are themselves Jewish (Chomsky, Finkelstein; Finkelstein's parents survived World War II concentration camps).



INTERNATIONAL
**HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE**
ALLIANCE

The concerns of the definition's author

Kenneth S. Stern is an American attorney, author, and director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate at Bard College. From 1989 to 2014 he was director on anti-Semitism, hate studies and extremism for the American Jewish Committee. Wikipedia⁸ reports that even he had concerns about the IHRA definition, despite being its lead drafter. "In December 2019, Stern, who has previously served as the lead drafter of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, expressed concern that right-wing Jewish groups and national governments were using the document to silence what he regarded as legitimate criticisms of Israel. Stern also claimed that the US President Donald Trump's 2019 Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism would stifle Palestinian free speech rather than protecting Jewish students. In December 2020, Stern urged the incoming Biden Administration not to adopt the IHRA Working Definition, claiming that it had been weaponized by pro-Israel lobby groups to silence criticism of Zionism."

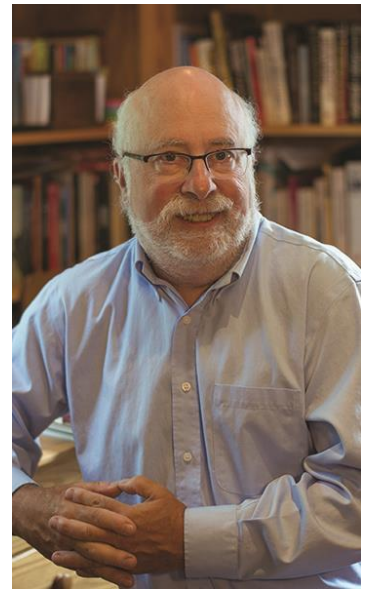
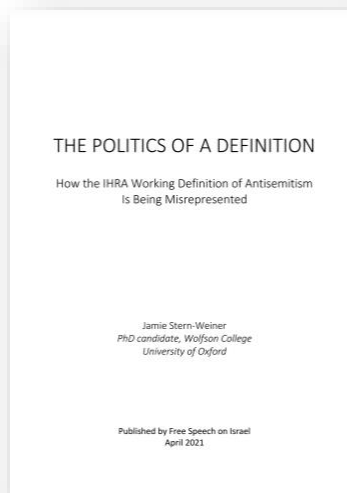
The Oxford study

This situation has been confirmed by a study at the University of Oxford⁹. In the foreword, Professor Avraham Shlaim, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, and a fellow of the British Academy (and himself Jewish), writes, "What is touted as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism is not a definition, has

little to do with anti-Semitism, and was neither written nor endorsed by IHRA. Such are the findings of this meticulously researched and politically explosive report. Scholars and legal experts have convincingly argued that IHRA's definition is incoherent, vague, vulnerable to political abuse, and not fit for purpose. It fails even to meet the most elementary requirement of a definition, which is to define"⁹.

Particular criticism is aimed at the 11 examples of anti-Semitism, which are shown to relate to Israel rather than to Jews, and to be later surreptitious additions to the definition. "The IHRA definition includes no examples. If there is widespread confusion about this, it is because champions of the examples within and outside IHRA have systematically and methodically misrepresented the Plenary's decision. The examples, falsely represented as part of the IHRA definition, have been used to delegitimise and censor legitimate criticism of Israel and, more broadly, to curtail free speech on Israel"⁹.

The report exposes four claims about the definition as untrue:



Kenneth S. Stern



Avraham Shlaim

- “1 There is no expert consensus supporting the Working Definition.
- 2 IHRA’s decision-making body, the Plenary, did not adopt any examples of ‘anti-Semitism’ as part of its Working Definition.
- 3 Senior IHRA officials and pro-Israel groups have misrepresented the IHRA plenary’s decision in order to smuggle into the Working Definition examples that can be used to protect Israel from criticism.
- 4 These examples have been used, in practice, to censor Israel’s critics”⁹.

The term *anti-Semitism*

What follows is a historical, etymological examination of the two terms, *anti-Semitism* and *holocaust*.

Who were/are the Semites? Encyclopedia Britannica¹⁰ defines them as “people speaking any of a group of related languages presumably derived from a common language, Semitic. The term came to include Arabs, Akkadians, Canaanites, Hebrews, some Ethiopians, and Aramaean tribes.” However, Wikipedia¹¹ notes that “[t]he terminology [Semite, Semitic] is now largely obsolete outside the grouping ‘Semitic languages’ in linguistics.” There are two Semitic languages nowadays: Arabic, used as a native language by around 350 million, and as the liturgical language of Islam by 1.9 billion; and Hebrew, with 9 million speakers.

It is often unclear whether writers have used the term to refer to

language, or have extended it to include ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. The term *Semitism* seems to have been resurrected in the 18th century. “Anthropologists of the 19th century such as Ernest Renan readily aligned linguistic groupings with ethnicity and culture, appealing to anecdote, science and folklore in their efforts to define racial character. Moritz Steinschneider, in his periodical of Jewish letters *Hamaskir* ... discusses an article by Heymann Steinthal criticising Renan’s article ‘New Considerations on the General Character of the Semitic Peoples, In Particular Their Tendency to Monotheism’. Renan had acknowledged the importance of the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Israel etc. but called the Semitic races inferior to the Aryan for their monotheism, which he held to arise from their supposed lustful, violent, unscrupulous and selfish racial instincts. Steinthal summed up these predispositions as ‘Semitism’, and so Steinschneider characterised Renan’s ideas as ‘anti-Semitic prejudice’.

“In 1879 the German journalist Wilhelm Marr began the politicisation of the term by speaking of a struggle between Jews and Germans in a pamphlet called ‘The Way to Victory of Germanism over Judaism’. He accused the Jews of being liberals, a people without roots who had Judaized Germans beyond salvation. In 1879 Marr’s adherents founded the “League for Anti-Semitism”, which concerned itself entirely with anti-Jewish political action”¹¹.



There are two monotheistic Semitic groups in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) and Israel: Arabs and Islam, and Jews and Judaism. Objections to the narrowing of the term anti-Semitic to include Jews but not the far more numerous Arabs have been voiced for decades.

The term *anti-Semitism* has recently been rewritten/punctuated as *antisemitism* in many quarters. That is, the hyphen has disappeared, along with the capitalisation of *S*. This has been made standard for some publishers, eg the AP Stylebook¹² and the *New York Times*¹³. The argument is that, since there is no such thing as Semitism, anti-Semitism is an inappropriate term.

This is all rather academic, as the criticism or hatred is not aimed at Jews per se, but at Israel (or Zion, to give the old name for Israel, including the whole of Jerusalem). Critics are thus not anti-Semitic or Anti-Jewish, but anti-Israeli or anti-Zionist.

The term *holocaust*

The word *holocaust* originated in the English language in the 13th century, to mean "sacrifice by fire, burnt offering". It came from the Old French (12th century) *holocaust*, or directly from Late Latin *holocaustum*, from Greek *holokauston*, meaning "a thing wholly burnt"¹⁴.

It has come to refer to the slaughter of people rather than the burning of things. "The first recorded use of the term *holocaust* in its modern sense was in 1895 by *The New York Times* to describe the massacre of Armenian Christians by Ottoman forces"¹⁵.

Its modern use, to refer to the slaughter of European Jews by the Nazis, dates to World War II.

Although it was just a common noun, it was given a capital letter, to identify it as the name of this particular event in world history. However, it was not the original word used for this. Instead, Jews used the Hebrew word *shoah*, translated as "calamity, catastrophe, destruction".

For Jews, the problem with the word *holocaust* was that it was used to refer to the slaughter of people by the Nazis and, in addition to the Jews who were the largest group, this included various other groups: Poles, Russians, the Roma (gypsies), the disabled, Jehovah's Witnesses, Communists, homosexuals, etc.

The Hebrew word *shoah*, translated as "calamity, catastrophe, destruction" is used to refer to the killing, persecution and making refugees of European Jews. It therefore bears a striking similarity to the Arabic word *nakba*, also translated as "calamity, catastrophe, destruction" to refer to the killing, persecution and making refugees of Palestinians since the establishment of Israel in 1948.



The holocaust of Armenian Christians by Ottoman forces

Conclusion

What we have seen examples of above is what is known in linguistics as (i) semantic narrowing, that is, making the meaning of a term more limited over time, and (ii) semantic shift, that is, changing the meaning from one thing to another that is radically different and unconnected. Commonly quoted English examples of semantic narrowing are *starve* (which originally meant simply "die" rather than the modern "die of hunger") and *meat* (which originally meant "food" rather than the modern meaning of "the flesh of an animal as food"). Semantic shift can be seen in the word *awful*, which originally meant "inspiring awe, wonder or fear", but nowadays has the very negative meaning of "very bad or unpleasant".

The word *Semite* originally referred to Arabs, Akkadians, Canaanites, Hebrews, some Ethiopians, and Aramaean tribes, who spoke languages descended from the more ancient Semitic language. There are two Semitic languages nowadays – Arabic and Hebrew – but, in the term *anti-Semitic*, the semantic focus is narrowed to only Jews, and the more numerous Arabic speakers are excluded.

The word *holocaust* originally meant a burnt offering, but through semantic shift changed into the slaughter of people, Armenian Christians being the first modern example. It then underwent semantic narrowing to refer to people slaughtered by the Nazis in World War II, and by further semantic narrowing, to only Jews.

The term *anti-Semitic* literally means "against Semitic peoples", which includes Arabs. By semantic narrowing, it has come to mean "against Jews" and, by semantic shift, to also mean "against Israel". It is worth remembering that over one-fifth of the population of Israel is Arab.

Semantic narrowing and shift are normally processes that take place naturally in society over the passage of time. However, the above examples have clearly all been manipulated.

In light of the above, the terms *anti-Semitic* and *holocaust* are best avoided. Muslims have no problem with people who are racially or religiously Jews, and do not deny that many Jews were killed in World War II. The terms *anti-Israeli* or *anti-Zionist* are suggested instead, to make clear exactly what is being objected to.

Readers are encouraged to consult some of the original documents used in this article:

Shaoquett Moselmane's speech:
www.facebook.com/100003054630156/posts/4652343621544080/?d=n,qrco.de/amust2

The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism:
holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism

The University of Oxford research report:
www.documentcloud.org/documents/20689366-stern-weiner-j-fsoi-the-politics-of-a-definition

- 1 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Rocket-Science-Mar-2022.pdf
- 2 mtalbertislamiccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rocket-Science-Feb-2022.pdf
- 3 www.amust.com.au/2022/04/nsw-parliament-endorses-ihra-definition-of-anti-Semitism
- 4 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Nile
- 5 www.facebook.com/100003054630156/posts/4652343621544080/?d=n,qrco.de/amust2
- 6 www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/23/ihra-misrepresents-own-definition-of-anti-semitism-says-report
- 7 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_Israeli_government
- 8 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_S._Stern
- 9 www.documentcloud.org/documents/20689366-stern-weiner-j-fsoi-the-politics-of-a-definition
- 10 www.britannica.com/topic/Semite
- 11 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semitic_people
- 12 twitter.com/apstylebook/status/1385687075635204100?lang=en
- 13 jewishinsider.com/2021/12/ny-times-replaces-anti-semitism-with-anti-Semitism-in-updated-style-guidance
- 14 www.etymonline.com/search?q=holocaust
- 15 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust

About half the US population disagree with government policy towards Israel

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a US Quaker body that “promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression”¹. It frequently turns its attention to the situation in Palestine.

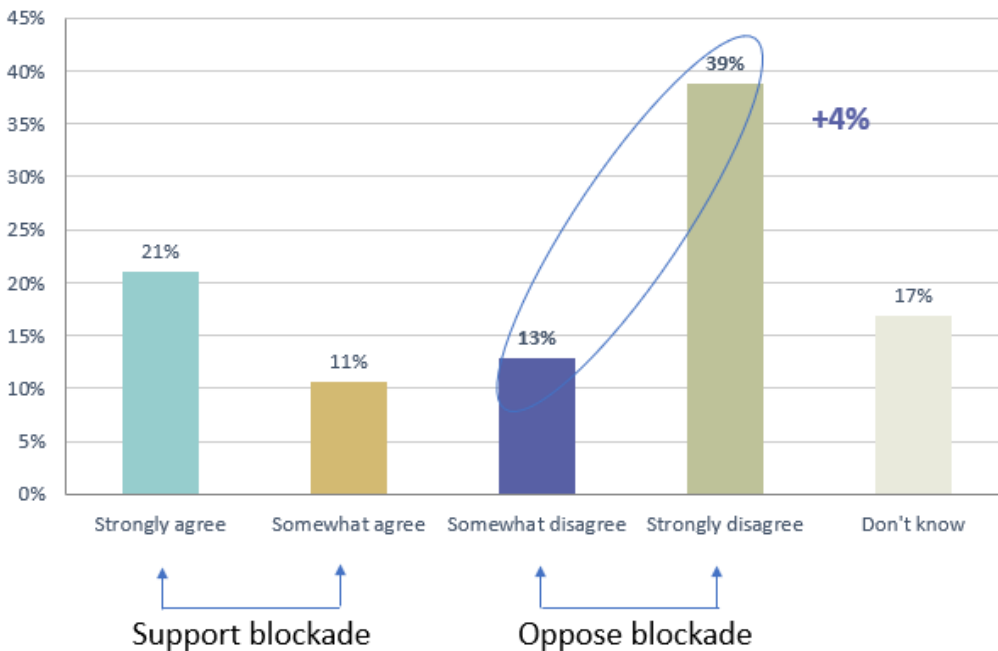
In November 2021, it conducted a survey² among 1,000 US adults, to assess US public opinion about the blockade of Gaza, and the US\$3.8 billion of military aid annually to Israel from the US government.

About half oppose the blockade

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) initially opposed the blockade. However, when information about the blockade was shared with the respondents, this figure rose to just over half (52%). AFSC concluded that “opposition to the blockade may grow when people are informed about what it means and its impact on people in Gaza.” This suggests that US media does not tell the full story.



...do you agree or disagree with the U.S. government's support of the blockade?



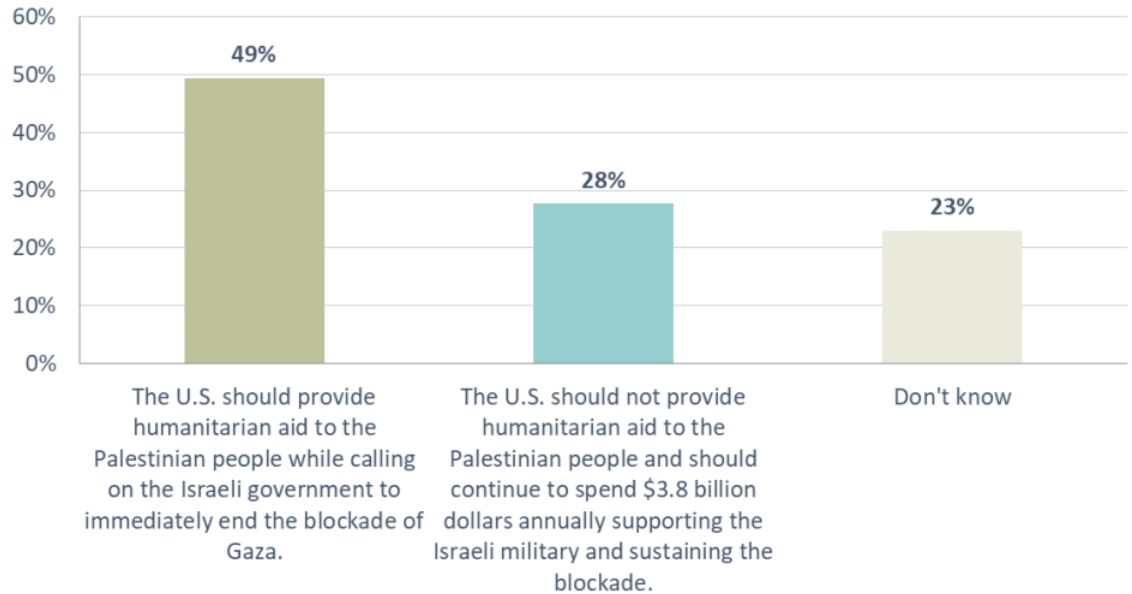
Over two-fifths agree that US military assistance sustains the occupation of Palestinian territory

After hearing about the US\$3.8 billion annual military aid, 42% of respondents agreed that “this sustains the Israeli occupation ... [and] encourages a dangerous arms race that fuels instability in the region.”

Almost half support the idea of US humanitarian aid to Palestinians

Nearly half (49%) responded that the US should provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians, and call on the Israeli government to end the blockade of Gaza.

Which of the following actions do you think the U.S. government should take with respect to the Gaza blockade? Please select the statement that most closely represents your views even if neither is exactly right.



Conclusion

52%, 42% and 49% are not insignificant numbers. For each question, those were the majority responses, because many people responded that they “did not know”. The US government is not – as all governments should do –

responding to the wishes and opinions of its population.

It also seems that many in the US population do not know the facts about the Israeli-Palestinian situation. This may be as a result of the coverage by the US media.

1 www.afsc.org/about-us
 2 www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/national-study-shows-many-americans-oppose-gaza-blockade?utm_campaign=weekendreading&utm_source=weekendreading0326&utm_medium=email&ms=EMA22WR0326&emci=8127e75e-06aa-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&emdi=fb7ef279-00ad-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&ceid=1104283

FIANZ condemns Israeli aggression



SINCE 1979

PRESS RELEASE

FIANZ CONDEMNS ATTACKS ON WORSHIPERS AT AL-AQSA MOSQUE

The Federation of Islamic Associations of Aotearoa New Zealand (FIANZ) strongly condemns the brutal attacks on the Muslim worshippers in and around the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem during the holy month of Ramadan. This sacred time also coincides with Good Friday commemorations by the Christian communities in the Holy City as well as the Jewish Passover.

What should have been a time of peace and worship for all the children of the Abrahamic faiths has yet again become a time of fear and violence as a result of the unprovoked attacks by Israeli forces, said Ibrar Sheikh, President of FIANZ.

It has been reported that the attacks began when the Israeli armed security forces stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, encircled Palestinian worshippers, and violated the sanctity and peace of Islam's third-most sacred Mosque. Israeli riot police fired tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets with complete disregard for the peaceful worshippers. Western media reports that the armed Israeli police were seen beating and assaulting countless others, including journalists and women. In the aftermath, around 160 Palestinians were left wounded, while hundreds were arrested.

Such acts of state-sponsored violence deserve swift and categorical condemnation by the world. They are in direct violation of international human rights law and go against the norms of acceptable human behaviour. Places of worship, and the faithful who come together to worship there, should never be the target of such brutal and cowardly violence, stated Ibrar Sheikh.

Earlier this year Amnesty International reported Israel's ongoing apartheid policy against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Human Rights Watch, Israeli Rights Group B'Tselem as well as Palestinian Rights Groups have all expressed similar concerns.

FIANZ calls upon the New Zealand Government to condemn Israel's human rights abuses and ongoing violations of international law and to exercise diplomatic pressure on Israel to cease its continued provocation and harassment of Muslim worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

FIANZ stands in solidarity with Palestinians and their right to freedom and self-determination.

END

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Minneapolis council approves athan



Jamal Osman

Minneapolis is the largest city in the US state of Minnesota. It has a population of 430,000. The first mosque was built in 1967, and the city now has more than 20 mosques. The state of Minnesota is home to more than 150,000 Muslims, many of them of Somali origin.

In March, the City Council announced that mosques would be allowed to broadcast the athan over loudspeakers¹. They do not need to apply for permits. However, there are two restrictions.

Firstly, as for other religions, such as church bells, they will only be allowed between the hours of 7 am and 10 pm. This means that the athan for fajr prayer will be too early to be broadcast, and that the athan for ishak prayer depends on the season and its timing.

Secondly, there is a noise limit of 70 decibels.

The bill that was passed in Council allowing the athan, was moved by

council member Jamal Osman. He was born in Somalia, but became a refugee in Kenya before moving to the USA at age 14.

"For the faith of Christians in Minneapolis, the tolling of church bells is an affirmation of their faith and the comfort that brings that's exactly the same purpose of athan service for Muslims," said Osman. "Thousands of Muslims in Minneapolis now have their faith acknowledged the same as everyone else."

"The city of Minneapolis is a welcoming city," Osman said. "We have a lot of work still to do to make sure everyone is enjoying the same rights, every religion is enjoying. This is a great step."

This follows a trend of over 15 years. The first legalised athan was in Hamtramck, Michigan in 2004, followed by Dearborn, Michigan, which has a Muslim majority. In 2020, Paterson, New Jersey, also legalised the athan.

¹ www.startribune.com/minneapolis-mosques-to-broadcast-call-to-prayer-all-year-round/600159507



Masjid An-Nur, Minneapolis

Islamophobia continues in Australia

In March, the third *Islamophobia in Australia* report^{1,2} was released. It documents that Islamophobia continues unabated in Australia. The report is based on incidents between 2018 and 2019.

There were 247 reported, verified incidents. Of these, 109 were online and 138 were physical (offline). There has been little change in this figure: 243 reports in the first report, in 2017, and 439 in the second, in 2019.

As the report's authors state, the actual figure of such incidents may be much higher. "Undoubtedly, analysed cases are only the tip of the iceberg. Islamophobia, like other hate crimes, is consistently underreported."

An easy target

The incidents are cowardly, in that the perpetrators are usually men, and the victims usually women. And this trend has increased. The perpetrators were 73% male in the 2019 report, but this has risen to 78%, while the victims were 68% female in 2017, 72% in 2019, but 82% in this report.

The perpetrators were overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon (91%, an increase from 78% in the previous report). They were mostly in middle and late adulthood (57%), while victims tended to be in early and middle adulthood (61%).

The visibility of wearing a hijab often triggers violence. Of the 103 female victims of physical abuse, 85% were wearing hijab, 48% were alone, 15% were with children and 12% were with other women.

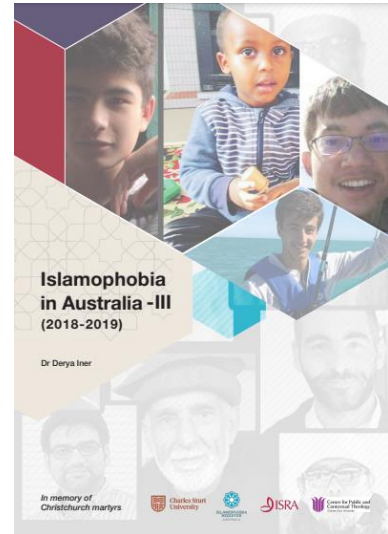
A Queensland woman reported she was yelled at when walking past three young boys. "I was with my two small children and they started saying 'Let's rip it [her hijab] off her head!' I quickly got nervous and started pacing to get away with my children before the incident escalated. Alhamdulillah, we made it to safety before anything serious happened."

"The reported incidents disclose that the perpetrator profile is diverse, ranging from homeless people and drug addicts to university staff and art gallery visitors"¹.

The majority of physical incidents "were hate speech (46%) followed by discrimination (14%) and multiple types of incidents at the same time (14%), then graffiti/vandalism (13%). Discrimination by authorities (including at workplaces and schools) increased from 6% to 14%, while physical assault slightly dropped from 12% to 8% since the previous report"¹.

Discrimination at work

The Tall Poppy Syndrome, coupled with Islamophobia, severely restricts Muslims' progress in the workplace. "According to the Australian Human Rights Report (AHRC 2021), almost half of Muslims (48%) face discrimination in the workplace or when seeking employment"¹. This is despite the fact that, in the 2016 Australian census, Muslims scored higher than the national average in tertiary and higher-level education. As a result of the Tall Poppy Syndrome, Australian Muslims scored lower than the national average for household income.



No safe place

You would think that the presence of security personnel or surveillance cameras would make areas safer. However, the report shows that exactly the opposite is the case. Anti-Muslim incidents in guarded areas rose from 37% in 2017, to 60% in 2019, and 75% in the present report. "It puts the effectiveness of security guards and systems into question"¹.

The Christchurch shootings

The Christchurch mosque shootings occurred on 15 March 2019, during the period examined in the report. It should also not be forgotten that the perpetrator was an Australian. After 15 March, the Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA)³ saw an increase in reporting of incidents. Physical incidents multiplied four times, while online incidents increased 18 times in the fortnight following the shootings.

Especially worrying is the fact that online "sympathisers with the

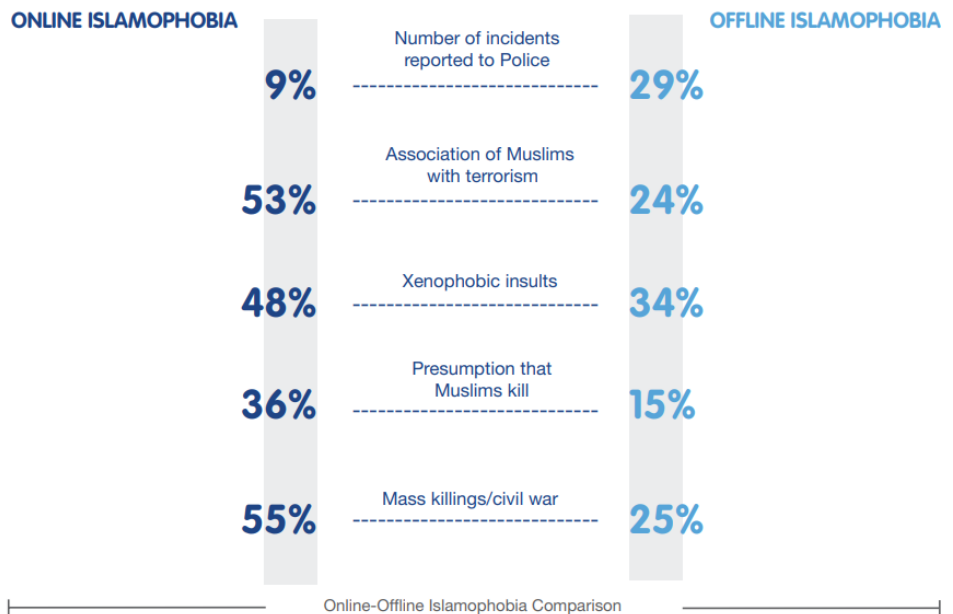
Christchurch terrorist justified or glorified his attack, called for more deadly and bloody attacks on Muslims or declared their willingness to follow the Christchurch terrorist by killing Australian Muslims once a 'civil war' starts in Australia"².

"The most popular death threat was mass killing of Muslims (55%). In line with beliefs about Muslims deserving to be killed, like in the case of Christchurch (35%), some extremists sought larger scale attacks to result in more killings of Muslims"¹.

Recommendations

The report (pp. 15-16) makes 12 recommendations, which follow on from the research data.

- Islamophobia is not a 'Muslim' problem but a social cohesion risk. It requires national engagement if Australia is to live up to its multicultural legacy.



- Positive action from the highest echelons of power is required to safeguard the dignity, equality and safety of every citizen and minority group, including Muslim Australians. Post-Christchurch support for Muslims by Australian politicians, media and the wider society showcased how to stand against hate and violence as a whole society.
- Public violence against Muslim women and children by predominantly male perpetrators demands concerted attention from government and the public, especially those dedicated to break the patterns of abuse directed at women and children.
- The continual increase in anti-Muslim abuse in guarded areas (from 37% in the first, 60% in the second and 75% in the present report) requires training security personnel and using surveillance cameras to deter anti-Muslim perpetrators from brazenly committing public attacks.
- Ideologically motivated mosque attacks in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks were found to be “traumatic” for the Australian Muslim community. Countering these attacks and minimising their impact can start with systematically recording these attacks and researching the community for effective solutions from within.
- Anti-Muslim abuse taking place mostly in frequented public places (63%) requires training and mobilising bystanders. Improving third party attitudes is essential to counter hate incidents in society.
- There needs to be acknowledgement of the fact that Islamophobia not only exists but also increases in quantity and severity while continuously ruining everyday Muslim Australians’ lives, especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks and due to the presence of Christchurch terrorist’s supporters and sympathisers readily available on social media.
- Social media platforms need to continue to take more responsibility for stopping the severe levels of hate in online communities, such as dehumanisation and disgust, which lead to wanting to remove/kill, and should be monitored carefully.
- The non-coincidental timing of inciting extreme hate and incitement to violence on social media suggests the need for intense monitoring and strategic moves by counterterrorism organisations.
- Consideration needs to be given to the way that terrorism laws, categories and media reporting positions ISIS and other self-declared Islamist organisations as religious causes instead of ideological or political ones, and the effects this has on Islamophobia and reactionary racist movements, police relations and judicial decision-making.
- Review of the application of laws for terrorism conspiracy and more minor weapons-related offences is needed to ensure the full spectrum of political or ideological plans for violence are treated equally before the law.
- Australia’s legal consequences for platforms and perpetrators need to be clearer, recognising that what occurs online undermines Muslims’ physical and psychological security.



1 www.isra.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Islamophobia-Report-3-2022-LR-Spreads-RA.pdf

2 www.amust.com.au/2022/03/lets-rip-it-off-her-head-new-research-shows-islamophobia-continues-at-disturbing-levels-in-australia

3 www.islamophobia.com.au

Credits

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Why attend Rocket Park jumuah?

Prayers are held at the **Senior Citizens' Association building, Rocket Park, New North Road, Mount Albert.**

- ✓ Central location
- ✓ Plenty of free parking
- ✓ Facilities for ladies
- ✓ Heating and air-conditioning
- ✓ Bayan (religious talk) before jumuah prayers
- ✓ All bayans and khutbahs in English

NB We are only open for Friday prayers – not for the five daily prayers.

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SwT, saw, as, ra

SwT: subhanahu wa ta'ala "Glory to Him, the Exalted" (when mentioning Allah)

saw: salallahu alaihi wassalam "May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him" (when mentioning Muhammad)

as: alaihis salam "Peace be on him" (when mentioning other prophets)

ra: radi allahu anhu/ha/hum "May Allah be pleased with him/her/them" (when mentioning members of Muhammad's family, companions, etc)