



## **The Problematic Definition of “Islamophobia”**

*September 20, 2013*

### **Introduction**

The International Civil Liberties Alliance notes with dismay the growing tendency in official discourse to use terms that are ill-defined or even undefined. This practice is especially worrisome when the topics being discussed are contentious, causing heated debates on both sides of an issue. Under these circumstances, it is crucial that precise, unambiguous definitions be provided, and that all parties discussing the issues agree on those definitions.

One such ill-defined term that has been used repeatedly in publications, papers, and interventions submitted by or to the OSCE is the word “Islamophobia”. Although opposition to its use is usually thought of as a “conservative” position, among those who find its use objectionable is the British Muslim socialist Romy Hasan:<sup>1</sup>

Since 11 September 2001, the epithet ‘Islamophobia’ has increasingly become in vogue in Britain — not only from Muslims but also, surprisingly, from wide layers of the left, yet the term is seldom elaborated upon or placed in a proper context. Invariably, it is used unwisely and irresponsibly and my argument is that the left should refrain from using it.

Shockingly, some on the left have, on occasion, even resorted to using it as a term of rebuke against the left, secular, critics of reactionary aspects of Muslim involvement in the anti-war movement. So what does the term mean?

As a relevant example of its widespread usage, consider “Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophobia through Education”, which was published jointly by OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO in 2011.<sup>2</sup> The document contains 49 instances of the word “Islamophobia” (including those used in footnotes and cited URLs), yet the closest it comes to a definition of the term is this brief description found on page 17:

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan, Romy, “‘Islamophobia’ and electoral pacts with Muslim groups”, Birmingham Socialist Alliance, July 2003, reproduced in *Shiraz Socialist*, September 21, 2007 <http://shirazsocialist.wordpress.com/2007/09/21/romy-hasans-lost-article-on-islamophobia-part-1/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.osce.org/odihr/84495>

“‘Islamophobia’, a term which is widely used by NGOs and frequently appears in the media, tends to denote fear, hatred or prejudice against Islam and Muslims.”

The above passage does not qualify in any way as a definition of “Islamophobia”, and yet the word forms the basis for an **entire guidebook officially published by OSCE**. It is completely unacceptable that an undefined term be employed in such a manner, especially when the topic referenced is currently so controversial.

At the Supplementary Human Dimension meeting in Vienna on July 12, 2013, in response to the repeated use of the term “Islamophobia” during various OSCE proceedings, Mission Europa Netzwerk Karl Martell requested a definition of the word.<sup>3</sup>

In response, the Turkish government representative Mr. Umut Topcuoglu quoted a definition<sup>4</sup> of “Islamophobia” that had been used previously. The definition itself<sup>5</sup> was written by Ömür Orhun, the former Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, and currently the Advisor and Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The inclusion of this definition without disclaimer in the official record of an OSCE event (OSCE “Supplementary Human Dimension” meeting in Vienna, 11-12 July 2013) has made it *de facto* an official OSCE definition:

Islamophobia is a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust, and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination, unequal treatment, prejudice, stereotyping, hostility, and adverse public discourse. Differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on stigmatization of a religion and its followers, and as such, Islamophobia is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims.

The wording of this definition bears a close resemblance to that of an earlier definition of “Islamophobia”, which was also written by Ambassador Orhun and published by the OIC in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

“Islamophobia is a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust and hatred of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through intolerance, discrimination and adverse public discourse against Muslims and Islam. Differentiating from classical racism and xenophobia, Islamophobia is mainly based on radicalisation of Islam and its followers.”

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the definition of “Islamophobia” officially recognized by the OSCE is essentially the same as the definition promulgated by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

This is a clear conflict of interest. It is analogous to allowing a government regulatory agency to assign an industrial firm the task of writing the official regulations that define how that same

<sup>3</sup> See the ICLA video of the intervention by Harald Fiegl: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMg5zTFxZlc>

<sup>4</sup> See the ICLA video of the intervention by Umut Topcuoglu: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nk8uxyK8L5U>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.osce.org/cio/101935>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oicun.org/74/20120116050228155.html>

firm is treated by the government. Such governmental practices are considered unethical and corrupt in all Western countries, including the participating states of the OSCE. The same standards recognized by governments should also apply to the OSCE: **Organizations with a vested interest in defining a particular term to their own advantage must not be permitted to write the official definition of said term.**

### **The History of the Word “Islamophobia”**

The term “Islamophobia” was coined a just over a century ago. The first recorded use of the word was in 1912, in French (“*l’islamophobie*”)<sup>7</sup>, and it reappeared occasionally in the 1920s and later in the century. Its original sense referred to a fear among modernized Muslims of the traditional forms of Islam, rather than an attitude towards Islam held by non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

“Islamophobia” was not recorded in English until much later, and may well have been an independent coinage rather than a translation from the French. By the time it gained currency in English, the meaning had shifted to be more or less the one we know today. Its use became more widespread in the late 1980s, in the wake of the Iranian fatwa against Salman Rushdie over his book *The Satanic Verses*:<sup>9</sup>

The term Islamophobia seemed to first appear in Britain during the Rushdie affair in the late 1980’s. This was an attempt by fundamentalist Muslims to silence critics such as Rushdie and his supporters for free speech by arguing that only the wider ‘Islamophobia’ of British society and state allowed this to pass unpunished. The implication was clear: criticism of Islam is tantamount to ‘Islamophobia’ and is therefore out of bounds. This is a position that progressives cannot and should not accept.

When the Runnymede Trust issued its landmark report in 1997, “Islamophobia” meant a “shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam — and, by extension, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims”.<sup>10</sup>

As the British sociologist Chris Allen later wrote,<sup>11</sup>

However both the [Runnymede] report and its model have failed to stand the test of time and a detailed analysis highlights a number of serious flaws. The most obvious disadvantage of the term is that it is understood to be a ‘phobia’. As phobias are irrational, such an accusation makes people defensive and defiant, in turn making reflective dialogue all but impossible.

<sup>7</sup> Delafosse, Maurice, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, under the direction of F. Clozel, E. Larose, Paris, 1912. Maurice Delafosse wrote on page 211: “*Quoi qu’en disent ceux pour qui l’islamophobie est un principe d’administration indigène, la France n’a rien de plus à craindre des musulmans au Soudan que des non musulmans.*” <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k103565h>

<sup>8</sup> Allen, Chris, “Islamophobia and its Consequences”, Centre for European Policy Studies, 2007, p. 148 <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=45668>

<sup>9</sup> Hasan, Romy, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Runnymede Trust, “Islamophobia: a challenge for us all”, 1997 <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150

... the instruments we have to define, identify and explain it neither measure up to the theory nor are they entirely bias-free.

Dr. Allen here highlights the most intractable problem with the term: a *phobia*, by definition, is irrational. Not only does the use of the word stigmatize those so designated — which was as far as the author cared to take his objection — it requires that those who apply it demonstrate the irrationality of the purported fear. In order to make the case, one would have to prove that the designated “phobic” had in fact nothing to fear from Islam. In most cases this would be difficult to do, and any attempt to examine the data needed for such a proof would subject the mass behavior of Muslims to scrutiny, which would cause controversy — and would in itself be considered evidence of “Islamophobia”.

Thus the definition of the word “Islamophobia” is problematic, and any proof of the existence of the condition it describes is difficult or impossible to obtain. Nevertheless, the word has gained widespread currency, appearing more and more frequently over the past ten years or so. In December 2004, then-Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, speaking at a seminar entitled “Confronting Islamophobia” in New York, referred to Islamophobia as an “increasingly widespread bigotry”.<sup>12</sup> The Organization of the Islamic Conference (now the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, OIC) established an “Islamophobia Observatory” in 2007, and it has been issuing reports annually ever since.<sup>13</sup> In April 2012 the OIC inaugurated a TV channel to counter Islamophobia.<sup>14</sup>

In May 2013, Dr. Hatem Bazian, the director of the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project at UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender, wrote:<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the crime of the terrorist is immediate, while that of the Islamophobes is long-lasting, for it creates and impresses on our collective public mind the logic of hate and racism that is then packaged to further justify the logic of “clash of ignorance” that is foundational to their [Sudden Ignorance] Syndrome.

This statement implies a moral equivalence between “Islamophobes” and terrorists who kill innocent bystanders with powerful bombs. To make such a comparison using such a hazily-defined word is to skate onto the thinnest of ethical ice.

The increasing use of an ill-defined word in heated polemics becomes significant when the term is meant to punish, intimidate, and silence those who criticize Islam and Shariah. If the word cannot be avoided, it is absolutely essential that it be precisely defined, and that the definition be acceptable to Muslims, critics of Islam, and disinterested parties alike.

### **An Examination of Terms**

<sup>12</sup> UN press release, 2004 <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9637.doc.htm>

<sup>13</sup> OIC website, updated monthly [http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/page/?p\\_id=182&p\\_ref=61&lan=en](http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/page/?p_id=182&p_ref=61&lan=en)

<sup>14</sup> *Arab News*, 2012 <http://www.arabnews.com/node/411340>

<sup>15</sup> The Islamic Human Rights Commission, <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/news/comment/10523-boston-bombing-islamophobia-and-sudden-ignorance-syndrome>

Here once again is the definition of Islamophobia provided by Umut Topcuoglu in July 2013.<sup>16</sup> Emphasis has been added to thirteen words or phrases that deserve further attention:

Islamophobia is a **contemporary** form of **racism** and **xenophobia** motivated by **unfounded fear, mistrust, and hatred** of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia is also manifested through **intolerance, discrimination, unequal treatment, prejudice, stereotyping, hostility, and adverse public discourse**. Differentiating from **classical racism and xenophobia**, Islamophobia is mainly based on **stigmatization of a religion and its followers**, and as such, Islamophobia is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims.

Six of the terms highlighted above are "loaded", in the sense that they are either of recent coinage or have recently acquired new meanings, and are commonly used to demonize, intimidate, and marginalize people who hold certain political opinions. These words are controversial, and thus should not be used in any official definition without themselves being defined:

2. Racism
3. Xenophobia
5. Intolerance
6. Discrimination
8. Prejudice
9. Stereotyping

The other seven words and phrases are problematic in various ways, even when the words themselves are well-defined and uncontroversial in their common usage.

Any terms whose contextual meaning might be unclear are defined. The definitions used below are all taken from the online version of the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

## 1. Contemporary

The adjective "contemporary" is a perplexing qualifier for the conditions identified as the components of Islamophobia. The relevant definition of **contemporary** in Merriam-Webster<sup>17</sup>:

2b: marked by characteristics of the present period : modern, current

Is "contemporary" racism different from that displayed by, say, the garrison manning the walls of Vienna during the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683? If so, what is the difference?

If there is no inherent distinction between the racism practiced centuries ago and that which exists today, then the use of the term "contemporary" is functionally meaningless, and should be abandoned.

## 2. Racism

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.osce.org/cio/101935>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contemporary>

"Racism" is a loaded word of relatively recent coinage (1933), and is as much a tool of political manipulation as "Islamophobia". The definitions of the term that are relevant to this discussion are as follows:<sup>18</sup>

- 1: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race
- 2: racial prejudice or discrimination

Let us imagine that a white European or North American expressed an opinion implying a prejudice against the following men, or a belief in their inferiority:

- Mustafa Cerić, a Bosnian imam who called for sharia in Bosnia<sup>19</sup>
- Abdul Wahid Pedersen, a Danish convert to Islam who in 2009 refused to condemn the practice of stoning, which he maintained is ordained by Allah<sup>20</sup>
- Ibrahim Hooper, Communications Director, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR, an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation terror financing trial)<sup>21</sup>

All three of these men are white Caucasians. As a result, any "prejudice or discrimination" against them cannot be termed "racism". Therefore it does not constitute "Islamophobia".

The obvious conclusion is that any feeling or opinion about Islam or Muslims cannot depend on "racism".

### 3. Xenophobia

"Xenophobia" is another modern word (1903), and is also loaded. Like "Islamophobia" and "racism", it was arguably invented as a means to intimidate opponents of a dominant political ideology. Merriam-Webster assigns it the following definition:<sup>22</sup>

- : fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign

Given this definition, how might "xenophobia" be applicable to "Islamophobia"?

Consider the Egyptian city of Minya, which recently experienced extensive violence at the hands of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. During August 2013, over the space of a few days<sup>23</sup>,

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>

<sup>19</sup> *Adnkronos International*, "Bosnia: Muslim spiritual leader urges more Sharia law", August 17, 2009, <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=3.0.3666977693>

<sup>20</sup> Article originally published by *Jyllands-Posten* (Danish), February 2009 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1604189>, English translation: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/02/to-stone-or-not-to-stone.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cair.com/about-us/cair-national-board-and-key-staff/ibrahim-hooper-communications-director.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/xenophobia>

<sup>23</sup> *AsiaNews*, "Minya: schools, churches and orphanages burnt to erase all traces of a Christian presence", August 28, 2013 <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minya:-schools,-churches-and-orphanages-burnt-to-erase-all-traces-of-a-Christian-presence-28852.html>

Islamic fundamentalists attacked and burned churches, orphanages, and homes belonging to Christians. The attackers chose their targets on the basis of religion; that is, buildings were set on fire because they were owned or occupied by Christians.

If those Christians are now afraid of Muslims or hate them, their feelings are not directed towards "strangers, foreigners or anything that is strange or foreign". Those who attacked them were their neighbors, and were in some cases personally know to them. Local Muslims were very familiar to Coptic Christians in Minya; they lived in the same community and spoke the same dialect.

The fear and hatred of Muslims by Christians in Minya therefore cannot be described as "xenophobia".

#### 4. Unfounded Fear, Mistrust, and Hatred

The words "fear", "mistrust", and "hatred" are clear in their commonly-used meanings, and so do not need to be defined. "Unfounded" is also well-understood, but since it is problematic in this context, its definition is instructive:<sup>24</sup>

: lacking a sound basis : groundless, unwarranted <an unfounded accusation>

Does a fear of Islam ever have a "sound basis"? Or is it always "groundless" and "unwarranted"?

Relevant examples might be drawn from a number of countries. In order to avoid excessive length, for the purposes of this examination we will consider only a series incidents that took place in Pakistan in the spring of 2013.

During March 2013, in the city of Lahore, a large crowd of angry Muslims converged on the Joseph Colony, a Christian neighborhood, after a Christian man was accused of blasphemy against Mohammed. The rioters looted and burned more than 160 residences, eighteen shops, and two churches<sup>25</sup>, injuring at least thirty-five people.<sup>26</sup> Estimates of the number of Muslims who participated in the assault range from three thousand<sup>27</sup> to twelve thousand.<sup>28</sup>

Also in Lahore, a Christian named Sadiq Masih Zafar was repeatedly threatened by Islamic groups for his involvement in the building of a church. He and his family were pressured to convert to Islam, and when they refused they were violently attacked. One of his two daughters

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unfounded>

<sup>25</sup> *Asia News*, March 13, 2013, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/160-houses-and-2-churches-burnt-in-Lahore:-photos-27383.html>

<sup>26</sup> *Asia News*, March 9, 2013, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore,-more-than-100-Christian-homes-burned-over-blasphemy-charge-27347.html>

<sup>27</sup> *Newsweek Pakistan*, March 12, 2013, <http://www.newsweekpakistan.com/scope/2691> (article no longer available at that URL; see Appendix A)

<sup>28</sup> *WVIP News*, March 10, 2013 <http://www.wvipnews.com/pakistan/529.html>

was kidnapped and severely injured. The two girls are now kept indoors by their father to prevent further attempts at kidnapping.<sup>29</sup>

Many more examples could be presented, extending all the way back to Partition in 1947. And Pakistan is just one of numerous Muslim-majority countries in which Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Zoroastrians, and atheists are repeatedly persecuted, attacked, and killed for their faith (or lack thereof).

Based on the evidence, if a Christian in Pakistan fears or hates Muslims and Islam, his misgivings can hardly be called “unfounded”, since they have a sound basis, are firmly grounded, and warranted by experience. The same might be said of non-Muslims in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia, and other countries or regions where Islam is dominant. The fears of non-Muslims in these places are not unfounded; therefore those unfortunate citizens cannot be characterized as “Islamophobes”.

One might advance the argument that non-Muslims who live in countries where Islam is the minority religion have nothing to fear from Islam, and that any negative characterizations of Islam by them would therefore constitute “Islamophobia”. However, consider this statement from the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs:<sup>30</sup>

Our doctrine states that if you accept any religion other than Islam, like Judaism or Christianity, which are not acceptable, you become an unbeliever. If you do not repent, you are an apostate, and you should be killed because you have denied the Koran.

Having read this *official* text, any Christian traveling to Saudi Arabia would have a sound basis for being afraid of Islam. Similar statements from Muslim leaders in other countries — including Western countries where Muslims are still a minority — demonstrate that a fear of Islam is warranted in any area where more than a small number of Muslims reside.

Moreover, the determination of the “sound basis” of any fear of Islam must of necessity involve the examination of the behavior of Muslims *en masse*. To do so would mean to research the incidence of Islamic violence and compile statistics about its frequency and extent. Unfortunately, as numerous dedicated scholars have already experienced, to conduct such research is to invite accusations of “Islamophobia” from prominent Islamic groups and their allies.

In other words, the attempt to determine whether a fear of Islam is warranted is in itself evidence of “Islamophobia”. Thus the definition of “Islamophobia” becomes effectively recursive. Those accused of it find themselves stigmatized with a self-referential term that cannot be examined or refuted using logic and the rules of evidence.

<sup>29</sup> *Asia News*, April 8, 2013, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Punjab,-convert-to-Islam-or-die:-The-20-year-long-nightmare-of-a-Christian-family-27597.html>

<sup>30</sup> bin Uthaimin, Sheik. *The Belief of Ahl Assuna wal Jammaat (The People of the Way and Community of the Prophet)*. Riyadh: The Ministry of Islamic Religious Affairs, 1995. (Published in Urdu) Collected from King Fahd Mosque, Culver City, CA, 12/04/04, as cited in *Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques*, Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, 28 January 2006, [http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special\\_report/45.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/45.pdf).



## 5. Intolerance

Checking the dictionary definition, we learn that “intolerance” means the quality or state of being **intolerant**:<sup>31</sup>

2a: unwilling to grant equal freedom of expression especially in religious matters

2b: unwilling to grant or share social, political, or professional rights : bigoted

Since the “intolerance” in question refers to Islam, in the following example consider the apparent intolerance exhibited by British banks. The issue was not corrected until 2005, when the banks banned a practice that was considered offensive by Muslims:<sup>32</sup>

British banks are banning piggy banks because they may offend some Muslims.

Halifax and NatWest banks have led the move to scrap the time-honoured symbol of saving from being given to children or used in their advertising, the Daily Express/Daily Star group reports here.

Muslims do not eat pork, as Islamic culture deems the pig to be an impure animal.

Salim Mulla, secretary of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, backed the bank move.

“This is a sensitive issue and I think the banks are simply being courteous to their customers,” he said.

Yet who is really practicing “intolerance” in this case?

Prior to 2005, the banks had been tolerant of people who liked piggy banks, but were also accessible to those who did not. After “correcting” their practices, they no longer catered to patrons who preferred and enjoyed piggy banks.

In other words, to accommodate its Islamic patrons, the banks in fact became *less* tolerant.

Tolerance is a two-way street. An open society in which freedom of choice is paramount allows for multiple preferences and tastes, even contradictory ones. This is one of the cornerstones of democracy and civil society.

## 6. Discrimination

Choosing among the various definitions of “discrimination” — which is yet another loaded term — we must assume that one of the following is intended:<sup>33</sup>

3a: the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually

3b: prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment <racial discrimination>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intolerant>

<sup>32</sup> *The Age*, October 24, 2005 <http://www.theage.com.au/news/World/Piggy-banks-offend-UK-Muslims/2005/10/24/1130006056771.html>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discrimination>

In addition to racial discrimination, which is cited as an example in (3b) above, gender-based discrimination is also often cited as an objectionable practice. In particular, discrimination against women has been judged unacceptable and illegal under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Based on the definition of "Islamophobia" cited by Mr. Topcuoglu, we would feel justified in assuming that Islam itself scrupulously avoids any form of discrimination against women.

Consider, however, the following verse from Sura 4 of the Koran:

(4:11) — (Inheritance) "The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females" (see also verse 4:176).

And this authentic (*sahih*) hadith from Bukhari:

(6:301) — "[Muhammad] said, 'Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?' They replied in the affirmative. He said, 'This is the deficiency in her intelligence.'"

Islamic scripture thus justifies discrimination against women. Since the Koran and the Sunna (of which the hadith form a part) are the basis for Islamic law as practiced by all four schools of Sunni jurisprudence, we must conclude that Islam discriminates against women as a matter of law.

Any objective observer would therefore be justified in doubting the wisdom of using the word "discrimination" in association with any definition of "Islamophobia".

## 7. Unequal Treatment

No dictionary definitions are required here: the meaning of the phrase "unequal treatment" is clear and generally accepted. If Muslims were to be treated differently from non-Muslims under the law, then that would be an example of unequal treatment, and clear evidence of "Islamophobia".

How does Islamic law handle these matters? First, consider Koran 2:178 (Muhammad Sarwar translation):

Believers, in case of murder, the death penalty is the sanctioned retaliation: a free man for a free man, a slave for a slave, and a female for a female. However, if the convicted person receives pardon from the aggrieved party, the prescribed rules of compensation must be followed accordingly. This is a merciful alteration from your Lord. Whoever transgresses against it will face a painful punishment.

Follow this with an authentic (*sahih*) hadith from Bukhari (Hadith 9.50 Narrated by Abu Juhafa):

...I asked, “What is on this paper?” He replied, “The legal regulations of Diya (Blood-money) and the (ransom for) releasing of the captives, and the judgment that no Muslim should be killed in Qisas (equality in punishment) for killing a Kafir (disbeliever).”

Islamic law thus prescribes different legal penalties for the same crime, one when the victim is a Muslim, and another when the victim is a non-Muslim.

Islam plainly treats Muslims and non-Muslims unequally as a matter of law. We must therefore conclude that Islam itself is “Islamophobic”.

## 8. Prejudice

“Prejudice” is another loaded word that demands extra scrutiny in light of its frequent misuse. We may assume that Mr. Topcuoglu, in formulating his definition of “Islamophobia”, had in mind this definition of **prejudice**:<sup>34</sup>

2c: an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics

The following is an excerpt from lessons that are taught to ninth-graders using *Hadith*, a recent Saudi school text:<sup>35</sup>

When God sent his Prophet Muhammad, He abrogated with his law all other laws and He commanded all people, including the people of the book, to believe him and to follow him. The people of the book should have been the first to believe him because they find him in their scriptures.

The clash between this Muslim nation and the Jews and Christians has endured, and it will continue as long as God wills. In this hadith, Muhammad gives us an example of the battle between the Muslims and the Jews.

The above passage narrates Abu Hurayrah, as recorded by Bhukari and Muslim, who are also the most authoritative and second most authoritative *hadith* scholars respectively, for the following:<sup>36</sup>

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet said, “The hour [of judgment] will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. It will not come until the Jew hides behind rocks and trees. It will not come until the rocks or the trees say, 'O Muslim! O servant of God! There is a Jew behind me. Come and kill him. Except for the gharqad, which is a tree of the Jews.’”

An objective observer cannot help but note that these passages, taken from scriptural texts confirmed as authoritative by the consensus of Islamic scholars, display irrational hostility

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prejudice>

<sup>35</sup> Ninth Grade, *Hadith*, Education Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1426-1427 (2005-2006), 146, as cited in *Excerpts from Saudi Ministry of Education Textbooks for Islamic Studies: Arabic with English Translation*, Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House with the Institute for Gulf Affairs, 2006, at 55, at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special\\_report/ArabicExcerpts.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/ArabicExcerpts.pdf). Cited hereafter as *Saudi School Texts*

<sup>36</sup> *Saudi School Texts*, 55.

towards both Jews and Christians (the former constituting a race as well as a religious group). This demonstrates that the core sacred writings of Islam contain evidence of racial and religious prejudice against Jews and Christians.

This is not to say that there may not also exist prejudice against Muslims among non-Muslims. However, we are ill-served by an overwhelming institutional emphasis on one type of sectarian prejudice when others — amply attested both by the historical record and by current events — are almost completely neglected.

## 9. Stereotyping

This is another loaded word that is commonly used to stigmatize anyone who criticizes — or even simply observes and comments on — the behavior of members of a designated “protected” group.

The dictionary tells us that “stereotyping” is the making of a **stereotype**:<sup>37</sup>

- 2: something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; especially: a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment

Determining exactly what constitutes an “oversimplified opinion” requires a very subjective judgment. How much can an opinion be simplified before it is “oversimplified”? How much generalization about a distinct group is allowed before it becomes a “prejudiced attitude”?

The following sentence is an example of simplification, but would probably be considered an acceptable description of Islamic practice: “*Most faithful Muslims face Mecca and pray five times a day, bowing and putting their foreheads against the floor while kneeling.*” This is an accurate representation of the behavior of average Muslims when they gather for corporate worship, and may be readily observed in public.

This sentence, on the other hand, might not fare as well: “*Muslim protesters often shout ‘Massacre those who insult Islam’ and similar slogans while carrying signs that read ‘Death to all those who insult the Prophet’ or other threats against non-Muslims.*” It is descriptively accurate — many such examples<sup>38</sup> have been observed at demonstrations and have been recorded and published by the news media — but the observation does not reflect well on Muslims or Islam. Thus it would commonly be seen as “stereotyping”, and cited as evidence of “Islamophobia”.

To summarize: a realistic précis of the behavior of Muslims may be considered acceptable and innocuous, or unacceptable “stereotyping”, depending on the content of what is observed.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stereotype>

<sup>38</sup> Examples: Australia: <http://twitchy.com/2012/09/15/australians-shocked-by-muslim-men-and-kids-signs-behead-all-those-who-insult-the-prophet/>; the UK: <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/02/06/london.cartoon.protests/> and <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/feb/06/raceandreligion.muhammadcartoons>; Egypt: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3325/egypt-kill-christian-reward>

## 10. Hostility

According to Merriam-Webster, **hostility** means:<sup>39</sup>

2: conflict, opposition, or resistance in thought or principle

As examples of conflict and opposition in religious matters, consider the following news reports, all of which describe incidents that occurred in Indonesia in the spring and summer of 2013. First, from March 25, 2013:<sup>40</sup>

Last Saturday, on the eve of Palm Sunday, Islamist groups (pictured) made serious threats against Catholics in Kepa Duri [Jakarta], telling the priest and the faithful to cancel scheduled weekend celebrations. Their hatred was triggered by the fact that the place of worship is located inside a school, which, in their opinion, "should not be used" for religious services.

From July 1, 2013:<sup>41</sup>

Islamic extremists are threatening to block celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Fr. Gregorius Utomo, scheduled for tomorrow, July 2. Relatives, friends and the faithful have organized a series of events and a solemn Eucharistic celebration, scheduled in the private chapel of prayer known as Wisma Tyas Dalem (House of the Sacred Heart). ... In recent days, on the eve of the celebrations, the fundamentalists of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) have, however, warned Fr. Utomo and faithful to stop all religious activities in program: they accuse the priest of using the house "in an illegal manner."

From July 19, 2013:<sup>42</sup>

The Islamist pressures against Christian communities in Aceh "have become intolerable. Within a year, with non-existent legal pretexts, 17 house churches have been closed: these also include Catholic chapels. The islamization of the province continues, just as promised by the governor Abdullah." It is the sense of the Annual Report published by IndonesianChristian.org, Protestant organization which monitors the situation of the Christian community in Indonesia.

From September 9, 2013:<sup>43</sup>

The Sharia "Police" and security officials in the district of West Aceh, the Indonesian province where Islamic law is in force, arrested Pastor Hendri Budi Kusumo and four other people, members of the Indonesian Mission Evangelist Church (GMII). The incident occurred last week, but only emerged in the past hours. According to reports the religious police - in charge of enforcing Islamic

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hostility>

<sup>40</sup> *Asia News*, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/West-Jakarta:-Islamist-threats-against-Holy-Week-celebrations-27488.html>

<sup>41</sup> *Asia News*, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Central-Java,-Islamic-extremists-against-celebrations-for-Fr.-Utomo's-50th-anniversary-of-priesthood-28344.html>

<sup>42</sup> *Asia News*, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Aceh,-increasing-intolerance-against-Christians:-17-house-churches-closed-2502.html>

<sup>43</sup> *Asia News*, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/West-Aceh,-Protestant-pastor-and-four-Christians-arrested-for-proselytizing-2957.html>

rules and customs - accused the five of "proselytism", because they were trying to "convert Muslims to Christianity in the area of Aceh."

Indonesia is a majority-Muslim country whose constitution guarantees religious freedom. The above examples show a persistent hostility displayed by Indonesian Muslims towards the country's large Christian minority. Such behavior in most cases is unlawful. One searches in vain for similar news stories involving Christian hostility towards Muslims in Indonesia.

Once again, this does not preclude the possibility of hostile attitudes displayed by non-Muslims against Muslims in Indonesia or anywhere else. However, the persistent focus on a single type of sectarian hostility at the expense of others is further evidence that the proceedings of the OSCE often treat Islam differently from other religions.

## 11. Adverse Public Discourse

Like other phrases used in Mr. Topcuoglu's definition of "Islamophobia", the meaning of "adverse public discourse" depends on subjective perceptions, and is therefore susceptible to misuse for political purposes.

The dictionary definition of **adverse**:<sup>44</sup>

2b: causing harm: harmful <adverse drug effects>

We will examine two examples of public discourse and consider which might be described as "harmful".

Geert Wilders is the leader of the most popular political party in the Netherlands<sup>45</sup>. He is often characterized as an "Islamophobe", and his speeches and writings are widely considered adverse to Islam. Mr. Wilders made the following statements in March 2013:<sup>46</sup>

In the Netherlands:

- There are almost 500 honor crimes each year, with on average one honor killing each month;
- Honor crimes are committed almost exclusively in an Islamic context;
- In Amsterdam alone, between 200 to 300 Islamic women have been imprisoned in their homes by male relatives;
- Some 30,000 women in the country have suffered female genital mutilation. Every year, about 50 girls are mutilated in this way in the Netherlands;
- In September 2010, of all women in women's shelters, 26% were of Turkish origin, 24% of Moroccan origin, 27% of Iraqi origin, and 23% of various mostly non-Western) countries.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adverse>

<sup>45</sup> *Dutch News*, September 9, 2013,

[http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/09/polls\\_put\\_wilders\\_pvv\\_out\\_on\\_t.php](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/09/polls_put_wilders_pvv_out_on_t.php)

<sup>46</sup> Geert Wilders' website, March 8, 2012, <http://www.geertwilders.nl/index.php/in-english-mainmenu-98/in-the-press-mainmenu-11/77-in-the-press/1823-wilders-a-pvv-issue-report-on-violence-against-women-in-islam>

Although what Mr. Wilders said may be considered hurtful to Muslims, it is factually-based, and the points he raises may be confirmed by examining official government statistics and accessing archives of media news stories.

It is useful to compare the above remarks with those of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. Sheikh Qaradawi is the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization to which former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi belongs. The sheikh said the following on Al-Jazeera TV in January 2009:<sup>47</sup>

“Throughout history, Allah has imposed upon the [Jews] people who would punish them for their corruption. The last punishment was carried out by Hitler. By means of all the things he did to them — even though they exaggerated this issue — he managed to put them in their place.

“This was divine punishment for them. Allah willing, the next time will be at the hand of the believers.”

Unlike Mr. Wilders’ assertions, Sheikh Qaradawi’s statements are not based on verifiable factual information or statistics. Furthermore, they are demonstrably harmful, and may even constitute incitement to genocide.

Yet while Mr. Wilders is routinely condemned for his “adverse public discourse”, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi’s utterances are not denounced by any other major non-Muslim political leader, not to mention any Islamic leaders.

This malleability of the meaning of “adverse public discourse” illustrates the political manipulation of terms in order to arrive at pre-ordained conclusions. In this case, the pre-determined consensus is that Geert Wilders is an “Islamophobe” and Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi is a “prominent Muslim spiritual leader”. Assigning “adverse public discourse” to the one and not to the other serves to reinforce the intended result.

## **12. Classical Racism and Xenophobia**

“Racism” and “xenophobia” have been covered above. The addition of “classical” as a modifier of these terms is perplexing.

What are “classical racism” and “classical xenophobia”? Mr. Topcuoglu seems to “differentiate” these terms from other varieties of “racism” or “xenophobia”. What might those varieties be?

Returning to the dictionary, we learn that **classical** means:<sup>48</sup>

1: standard, classic

or:

4a: authoritative, traditional

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<sup>47</sup> The Middle East Media Research Institute, January 30, 2009, “Hitler ‘Put The Jews In Their Place’”, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/3062.htm>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/classical>

How can racism be “standard”, “classic”, or “authoritative”? Do racists recognize a common “authority”? This makes no sense.

There the only plausible interpretation must be “traditional”. But from what “tradition” of racism does “Islamophobia” differ? Are we to pinpoint modern differences of opinion with Adolf Hitler? With Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon?<sup>49</sup>

What criteria are we obliged to choose?

There has been a concerted effort over the past ten or fifteen years to codify “Islamophobia” as a form of “racism” in the official terminology employed by the United Nations. One presumes that Mr. Topcuoglu is continuing this process with his definition.

If “Islamophobia” is to become a new form of “racism” — as distinct from the “classical” variety or any other species of the term — then the precise correlation must be specified. As we observed in the above section on “racism”, there is no logical way in which Islam may be considered equivalent to a race.

Further explanation is required.

### 13. Stigmatization of a Religion and its Followers

“Stigmatization” means “the process of stigmatizing”. To **stigmatize** is defined as:<sup>50</sup>

1b: to describe or identify in opprobrious terms

The definition of “religion”:<sup>51</sup>

1b: the service and worship of God or the supernatural

We are frequently reminded by Muslims that Islam encompasses far more than religion; it is not simply a matter of serving and worshipping God. Among other things it is an entire legal system, whose strictures and requirements are mandatory for all Muslims. In “Islamic Finance: An Introduction” by Saultat Pervez on the “Why Islam?” website, we read:<sup>52</sup>

Muslims often try to explain that Islam is more than a religion. They contend that Islam is actually a ‘way of life,’ with the Quran and the life traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) providing a blueprint for daily life. From marriage and family life to lawful food and drink, from modesty in dress and excellence in social manners to ethics in trade and finance, Islam encompasses all aspects of our existence.

<sup>49</sup> “Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon”, *Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne*, [http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/personnage/Georges\\_Louis\\_Leclerc\\_comte\\_de\\_Buffon/110519](http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/personnage/Georges_Louis_Leclerc_comte_de_Buffon/110519)

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stigmatize>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.whyislam.org/social-values-in-islam/social-ties/islamic-finance/>



So what is the legal code that Muslims follow to determine which behaviors are “lawful”? The most authoritative source is *’Umdat al-salik wa ’uddat al-nasik*, or *The reliance of the traveller and tools of the worshipper*. It is commonly referred to as *Reliance of the Traveller* when cited in English.<sup>53</sup>

The English translation is an authoritative source on Sunni Islamic law, because it is certified as such by Al-Azhar University in Cairo. There is no higher authority on Sunni Islamic doctrine than Al-Azhar; it is the closest equivalent to the Vatican that may be found in Islam.

At the beginning of Book A, “Sacred Knowledge” (p. 2), we read:

(Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf:) There is no disagreement among the scholars of the Muslims that the source of legal rulings for all the acts of those who are morally responsible is Allah Most Glorious.

In Book B (b7.1), al-Misri details the four necessary integral elements of consensus. If those are met, the ruling agreed upon is authoritative (b7.2):<sup>54</sup>

When the four necessary integrals of consensus exist, the ruling agreed upon is an authoritative part of sacred law that is obligatory to obey and not lawful to disobey. Nor can mujtahids of a succeeding era make the thing an object of new *ijtihad*. because the ruling on it, verified by scholarly consensus, is an absolute legal ruling which does not admit of being contravened or annulled.

In other words, Islamic law is fixed and eternal, and mortals may not change it. It is also *authoritative*; that is; it is binding upon all observant Muslims.

Since Islamic law is an integral part of Islam, to oppose Islam is to oppose Shariah (Islamic law). Furthermore, the primary issue for many so-called “Islamophobes” is Islamic law, because the tenets of Shariah, as laid out in *Reliance of the Traveller* and other manuals of Islamic jurisprudence, are contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the European Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of the United States.

For that reason, opposition to Islamic law is no more “phobic” than opposing the Napoleonic Code or the Code of Hammurabi. Based on the commandments of their religion, Muslims might find themselves in opposition to Mosaic Law, the English Common Law, or the U.S. Constitution. Yet no one would question their right to express such opposition, nor accuse them of being “Christianophobes” for their principled stance.

If the definition of “Islamophobia” hinges on fear or hatred of a *religion*, then it manifestly fails in most instances where it is applied. Such designations are erroneous, since the vast majority of those who oppose Islam specifically oppose Islamic law (*Shariah*), as laid down in the Koran and the hadith, and codified in the *fiqh* (the body of Islamic jurisprudence).

<sup>53</sup> *’Umdat al-salik wa ’uddat al-nasik*, or *The reliance of the traveller and tools of the worshipper*, The Revised Edition (published 1991, revised 1994), “The Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law ’Umdat al-Salik by Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri (d. 769/1368) in Arabic with Facing English Text, Commentary, and Appendices”, edited and translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller. Amana Publications, Beltsville, Maryland

<sup>54</sup> Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller*, Book B, at § b7.2, pp. 23-24

Furthermore, such opposition to Shariah cannot be characterized as "stigmatization", provided that it quotes Islamic law accurately, recognizes established precedents, and cites real examples.

## Conclusions

The definition of Islamophobia as presented by Umut Topcuoglu fails to meet even minimal standards of logic, coherence, and objectivity. As such it must be rejected for any further usage in OSCE proceedings.

As mentioned above, six of the terms used in the definition ("racism", "xenophobia", "intolerance", "discrimination", "prejudice", and "stereotyping") are "loaded", in the sense that they are either of recent coinage or have recently acquired new meanings, which alone is reason enough to render the definition questionable for any scholarly use. Words that are commonly used to demonize, intimidate, and marginalize certain viewpoints are always unacceptable in presentations that affect public policy. Unless the controversial "loaded" terms are themselves clearly defined, they should be excluded.

The definition fails utterly through its inclusion of three phrases (#7, "unequal treatment", #13, "stigmatization of a religion and its followers", and #4, "unfounded fear, mistrust, and hatred"). Specifically:

**Unequal treatment.** As described in the "Examination of Terms", Islam itself (via Shariah) treats non-Muslims differently from Muslims. Under the given definition, Muslims would themselves be guilty of "Islamophobia". This is a logical absurdity, and the definition falls because of it.

**Stigmatization of a religion and its followers.** The vast majority of Islam-critics do not "describe or identify [the Islamic religion] in opprobrious terms". Their critiques are focused almost entirely on the tenets of *Islamic law* (and the practical implementation of those tenets), which are not at all religious. Criticism of the religious elements of Islam is rare, mild, and often non-existent. This term therefore deflects the discussion into a "straw man" argument, and the definition falls because of it.

**Unfounded fear, mistrust, and hatred.** This is the heart of the definition of "Islamophobia". Any fear, mistrust, or hatred of Islam must be shown to be unfounded if it is to constitute Islamophobia. As previously demonstrated, millions of non-Muslims all over the world have well-founded empirical reasons to fear Islam, and thus cannot possibly be described as "Islamophobes". Furthermore, any investigation into the basis for the fear of Islam — which requires research into and discussion of the collective behavior of self-identified Muslims in real-world situations — is almost always itself condemned as "Islamophobia". Therefore the definition of "Islamophobia" makes the word into a self-referential term. This is a violation of logic, and the definition falls because of it.

Other logical failures detailed in the previous section include those for "racism", "xenophobia", and "stereotyping". Additional logical problems are presented by "contemporary" (incoherent

usage in context), and “classical racism and xenophobia” (demands clarification of the meaning of “classical” in this context).

Five other terms (“intolerance”, “discrimination”, “prejudice”, “hostility”, and “adverse public discourse”) were analyzed and shown to be applicable to Islam itself. This is not a logical argument against their appearance in the definition — it would be a *tu quoque* fallacy to make such an assertion — but it adds weight to the failure of the definition on logical grounds. Reciprocity of behavior, commonly referred to as the “Golden Rule”, is a core cultural value in Western societies. Islam’s manifest failure to exhibit normative reciprocity argues persuasively against the inclusion of these five terms in any definition of “Islamophobia”.

We cannot help but conclude that the definition of “Islamophobia” as presented by the Turkish representative in Vienna on July 12, 2013, is *prima facie* utterly without merit, and must be abandoned.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. To ODIHR:** Based on the above, ODIHR must abandon any discussion of the term immediately. The term must be removed from any existing official publications, and may not be included in any future publications.
- 2. To the Participating States:** Refrain in all circumstances from using the term “Islamophobia” in any public discussions, papers, publications, brochures, and other printed material.
- 3. Alternatively, to ODIHR:** Appoint a committee whose duty will be to establish a definition of Islamophobia that is acceptable by consensus. The makeup of the committee must include Muslims, Jews, Christians, and atheists. The non-Muslims on the committee should include in equal numbers supporters of Islam, critics of Islam, and people with no opinion on Islam.

## **Appendix A**

**Text of *Newsweek Pakistan* article from March 12, 2013, originally accessed at <http://www.newsweekpakistan.com/scope/2691>, and now unavailable**

Protesting Joseph Colony Rampage

Christians across Pakistan rallied against torching of over 100 Christian homes in Lahore by more than 3,000 Muslims.

Christians demonstrated in cities around Pakistan on Sunday to protest the torching of more than 100 Christian homes by a Muslim mob following allegations of blasphemy.

More than 3,000 Muslims on Saturday rampaged through Joseph Colony, a Christian area of Lahore, after allegations surfaced that a Christian had made derogatory remarks about Islam's Prophet three days earlier.

Around 150 people have been arrested, police said, and though no one was killed the incident highlights the religious tensions affecting Pakistan as it prepares for a general election expected in May, following a spate of deadly attacks on the minority Shia Muslim community.

Police and locals said a drunken row between two friends was the trigger for the allegations of blasphemy, a hugely sensitive issue in Pakistan, where 97 percent of the population is Muslim and even unproven claims can spark public violence.

During Sunday's protest in Lahore, Christians demanded greater protection and clashed with police, who used batons and tear gas to disperse them after they blocked a busy road, senior police officer Abdul Ghaffar Qaisarani said. There were also minor clashes between police and protesters in Karachi and further demonstrations in Islamabad, Multan and Quetta.

The Punjab government initially promised Rs. 200,000 compensation to each family affected by the violence, but Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif raised this to Rs. 500,000 after visiting the scene on Sunday. "The chief minister declared that the repair work of all the houses would be completed in 72 hours," a senior Punjab government official said.

A group of 30 senior Muslim clerics in Lahore issued a fatwa (religious ruling) on Sunday condemning the attack on the Christian community as criminal and un-Islamic, Fazal Karim, the chairman of the Sunni Ittehad Council said.

The senior police official for the area of the attack, Multan Khan, said the trouble began with a row between Sawan Masih, a Christian sanitary worker, and his Muslim friend Shahid Imran. "They used to sit together and drink together almost every evening. They were drunk on Wednesday when they had some arguments," Khan told reporters on Saturday.

It was during the argument that Masih allegedly made the blasphemous remarks, Khan said, prompting Imran to report the matter to police.

Officers arrested the Christian on Friday, but this did not stop a mob assembling to attack Joseph Colony on Saturday morning. Local resident Altaf Masih, also a sanitary worker, said "while they were drunk they had an argument over discussion on religious issues."

Spokeswoman for Punjab police Nabila Ghazanfar said on Sunday that four senior officers including Khan had been removed from their posts for "negligence" and "failure to control" the mob.

Rights campaigners say Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws, which can carry the death penalty, are often used to settle personal disputes and should be reformed. The legislation came under international scrutiny last year after 14-year-old Christian girl Rimsha Masih was held for three weeks in a high security prison for allegedly burning pages from the Quran. The case against her was eventually thrown out.

The Supreme Court has scheduled a hearing on the attack for Monday and summoned the chief of police in Punjab and the provincial prosecutor to appear.

Tahir Ashrafi, president of Pakistani Ulema Council, condemned the attack saying Islam did not permit such violence.

On Saturday, Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf ordered an inquiry into the attacks.