

EGYPT: Coptic teacher cleared of contempt of religion for questions about Muhammad

World Watch Monitor (25.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2KfyriH> – A Coptic teacher has been found not guilty of contempt of religion, after he was charged last month for including wordplays in a set of questions about Islam's prophet, Muhammad.

During the hearing on 19 April, both the headmaster of the school and a local MP defended the teacher, Magdy Farag Samir, saying he had a "good reputation and good manners" and that "he did not mean to insult".

Following the verdict, local Coptic priest Armia Abdou Bebawy told World Watch Monitor: "We thank the Egyptian judiciary for not discriminating between citizens. This case has boosted cohesion and community peace."

He added that Copts "appreciate, respect and cherish everyone's faith".

Why was he charged?

Samir, 49, a teacher of social studies at Barot Preparatory School for Girls in Beni Suef Governorate, had asked his students: "Where was the prophet Muhammad born?" He then

suggested three options: 1. Yathrib (in Saudi Arabia). 2. Mecca (also in Saudi Arabia) 3. Hafiza Abo Tartour (Abo Tartour is a village in Egypt, but also the word for a cone hat).

He also asked: "Who was the nurse of the prophet Muhammad?" The two options were: 1. Halima Al-Saadia (the correct answer). 2. Halima Bta'at El ta'amiya ("Bta'at El ta'amiya" translates as "a seller of falafel", a Middle Eastern dish).

"The students and their parents considered this as an insult to the prophet Muhammad and Islam," said a relative of the teacher, who did not wish to be named, "But Magdy didn't mean any kind of insult, he did that just to facilitate the right answers to the two questions."

Samir was forced to transfer to a different school following the incident, which took place in December, but the parents of his former students also submitted a formal complaint against him to the governorate's Directorate of Education, which was then sent to the Public Prosecution Office for investigation.

On 14 March, Samir was arrested and charged with contempt of religion. He was initially detained for four days, but a day later his detention was extended to 15 days, pending investigation.

'Crimes of contempt in Egypt only refer to contempt of Islam'

“The revolution of June 2013 was supposed to get rid of the religious regime,” a human rights activist from Minya, who also did not wish to be named, told World Watch Monitor, “But this has not been achieved so far. Many Copts are being charged with contempt of religion and jailed for nothing ... because the revolution dropped the Muslim Brotherhood but left their ideology unchanged.”

“Egypt’s law of contempt of religion only applies to one side – Islam,” he added. “Crimes of contempt in Egypt only refer to contempt of Islam.”

A Coptic lawyer from Beni Suef, who again wished to remain anonymous, told World Watch Monitor: “The judicial system has recently discriminated against Copts and perpetrated injustice. Copts face judicial discrimination most blatantly in prosecutions for blasphemy.”

Convictions for contempt of religion are “harsh” against Copts, said another Coptic lawyer, from Cairo. “The accused person is charged with several offences, such as ‘provoking sectarian strife’ and ‘contempt of religion’. This is done in order to increase the term of their incarceration,” he said.

“People accused of contempt of Islam are not only sanctioned by the courts but also ostracised by their community, who force Copts to leave their homes,” the lawyer added, saying extremist Muslims play a significant role in cases of contempt of Islam filed against Christians – by assembling in front of courts to put pressure on judges.

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CANADA: Anti-Semitic incidents rise to record level in Canada

JTA (25.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2Hw1ZL1> – Canada had a record number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2017, B'nai Brith Canada reported in its annual audit.

There were 1,752 incidents of harassment, vandalism and violence, a 1.4 percent increase over the record 1,728 last year, according to the Audit of Antisemitic Incidents released Tuesday.

The vast majority of the incidents took place in Canada's two largest provinces. Ontario recorded nearly half the total, with 808, while Quebec had 474. The rest were scattered among

the nation's eight other provinces.

Acts of anti-Semitic vandalism doubled to 322 from 158 – the audit called it a “whopping national increase.”

The audit also saw as a “disturbing anti-Semitic trend” a rise in anti-Semitism from both the far right and far left of the political spectrum.

Quebec, with Canada's only majority francophone population, “is home to Islamist extremist enclaves, a sophisticated far-right scene, and many of Canada's largest anti-Israel groups,” the audit said.

To counter these trends, the audit proposed an eight-point plan to increase resources for police hate crime units, a national “Action Plan” and other measures.

“Anti-Semitism has grown as a serious concern for Canadian Jews, affecting them at school, in the workplace and even in their own places of worship,” B'nai Brith Canada CEO Michael Mostyn said.

“[W]e need a concerted national effort to ensure that anti-Semitic outbreaks do not become a fact of life for Jews in this country, as in other developed countries such as France and Sweden.”

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**Viral photo prompts
Indonesian government moves
toward banning child marriage**



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Photo Source: Thomson Reuters Foundation

A photo of two young teenagers trying to register their marriage on the island of Sulawesi has been shared widely online since last week

By Beh Lih Yi

Thomson Reuters Foundation (24.04.2018) – <https://tmsnrt.rs/2vEUtIa> – Indonesia is moving towards a ban on child marriage, officials said on Tuesday after a photo of a teenage couple who tried to tie the knot went viral on social media.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, is among 10 countries with the highest number of girls marrying before they turn 18, according to campaign group Girls Not Brides.

A photo of a 15-year-old boy and a girl, 14, trying to register their marriage on the island of Sulawesi has been shared widely online since last week, sparking renewed pressure on the government to end such underage unions.

President Joko Widodo has agreed to sign a decree that would ban child marriage, a spokeswoman at the Women Empowerment and Child Protection Ministry told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

No other details were available immediately, but the spokeswoman said public dialogues on the matter would be held.

The ministry has been pressing the government to raise the minimum age for marriage to 20 for girls, and 22 for boys.

Under Indonesian laws, girls can marry at the age of 16, and 19 for boys if parents give their consent. Girls can be married at an even younger age if religious courts agree.

Women's rights campaigners said a ban is long overdue.

"Child marriage is a form of sexual violence," said Ninik Rahayu, one of the female Islamic clerics who jointly issued an unprecedented fatwa against child marriage last year.

A fatwa, or religious edict, is influential among Muslims although it is not legally binding.

“Child marriage has reached an emergency level in Indonesia. If we don’t take action quick enough, it will destroy the future of our children,” Rahayu told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Andreas Harsono from campaign group Human Rights Watch said the Indonesian government’s pledge is “bold” but action must be taken without delay.

Campaigners say poverty and tradition continue to drive underage marriage in Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago in Southeast Asia with a population of 250 million people.

One in four girls marry before they turn 18 in Indonesia, according to the United Nations’ children agency, UNICEF. On average over 3,500 Indonesian girls are married off every day.

Globally, 12 million girls become child brides each year, the Girls Not Brides group says, exposing them to greater risks of exploitation, sexual violence, domestic abuse and death in childbirth.

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USA: Maine Democrats quash bill to criminalize FGM

By Meira Svirsky

Clarion Project (24.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2qXIu32> – A bill to criminalize female genital mutilation (FGM) in Maine was squashed by House Democrats due to political correctness and misplaced concerns about Islamophobia.

The vote ironically came during the “Week of the Young Child.”

The bill would have held the mutilator, consenting parents and/or guardians and the transporters accountable for their part in perpetrating the FGM and exacted penalties from each of these parties.

Instead of passing the bill, all the House Democrats save for one, voted against the bill amid ad hominem cries against one of the bill’s sponsors, Republican legislator Rep. Heather

Sirocki. Specifically, the Southern Poverty Law Center published emails between Sirocki and a Maine member of ACT for America, which the law center bogusly claims is “the largest anti-Muslim hate group in the United States.”

During testimony regarding the bill, Leftist activists questioned why a white woman was fighting so hard to defend immigrant girls and accused the sponsors of the bill of being racists, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant. Listen to the accusations by clicking [here](#)

Legislators also heard heart breaking testimony from an FGM survivor, yet they were not moved.

But the story doesn't end here. Last week, House Democrats passed a toothless bill that appears to ban FGM but in fact does not. That bill removed all penalties for those involved with the crime. In addition, the word “mutilation” was removed from the definition of the barbaric practice. (House Republicans rightly rejected that bill.)

The bill was then sent back to the Senate, which re-inserted the penalties for all those connected to the crime. The bill passed the Senate 30-5, with the dissenters hailing from Far-Left parties.

Why this legislation is needed

One may wonder why state legislation criminalizing FGM is

needed since FGM has been illegal in the U.S. on a federal level since 1996. This reason is that, until a recent case in Michigan, federal legislation has been insufficient to stopping FGM since prosecutors usually defer to state law when charging a crime.

In practical terms, what this has meant is that in states that do not have their own laws criminalizing the practice, perpetrators are usually charged with child abuse, assault or the like, which results in lesser sentences.

In fact, the on-going case in Michigan is the very first instance of a federal FGM prosecution since the federal legislation was passed 22 years ago.

“That’s one reason that state legislation is important,” said Ayaan Hirsi Ali Foundation Senior Director Amanda Parker in an interview with Mic. “It gives prosecutors the tools that they need to really fight this.”

FGM is a barbaric practice commonly found in (but not limited to) Muslim countries across the world that involves either cutting off part of or the entire clitoris, removing the labia, narrowing the vaginal opening and/or executing other painful alterations to a woman’s genitals for no medical purpose, according to the World Health Organization.

It involves intense pain, shock, sometimes even death. Survivors are plagued with a lifetime of emotional trauma as well as severe physical effects ranging from decreased or lack

of sexual response to painful intercourse and childbirth, at best.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that approximately 513,000 girls are at risk of FGM in the United States.

There are literally no words to describe the audacity of these Maine lawmakers who have, by their actions, condemned innumerable women and girls to a lifetime of avoidable pain and suffering. Their suggestion that it is "racist" for a white woman to advocate for the basic human rights of a non-white woman is not only an outrageous proposition but falls squarely in the very definition of racism.

What is the future for a country that has devolved into making the sexual mutilation of women and girls into a partisan issue?

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India's death penalty for rapists of young girls could push them to kill

With the majority of rapes committed by someone known to the victim, the new law could drive offenders to murder to avoid detection

By Rituparna Chatterjee

The Guardian (24.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2qZ8CKP> – n Saturday India's government approved the death penalty for convicted rapists of girls under the age of 12, amid a groundswell of public outrage following the gang-rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in Jammu and Kashmir state.

The shocking case involved a girl from the Bakarwal nomadic tribe, who was out grazing her horses when she was abducted, drugged and murdered after a week of torture and repeated rape. It led to a nationwide outcry for swifter justice.

However, the hastily issued executive order is facing criticism from activists and politicians, who say the death penalty, usually meted out for severe crimes in India, will not be a deterrent to child rapists without an overhaul of the criminal justice system.

“I am afraid this [executive order] has very little credibility because what is required is certainty of punishment,” the leader of Communist Party of India (Marxist), Brinda Karat, told reporters.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau data from 2016, in 94.6% of cases, the perpetrator is known to the victim – usually a brother, father or someone from the family’s social circle. Reporting rape in India’s patriarchal family structure is often fraught with victim shaming and further alienation.

Child rights activists fear the introduction of the death penalty will make families more likely to cover up sexual crimes, and that rapists might kill their victims to avoid detection.

Critics are also concerned that the order, which was approved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s cabinet on Saturday, makes no mention of boys. In a country where male children often grow up in an atmosphere that discourages them from showing vulnerability, experts say such a discriminatory legal provision will fail boys who have been sexually assaulted.

Unlike the current Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (Pocso) 2012, which is gender-neutral and defines any person under 18 as a child, the new ordinance will stop boys who have been sexually abused from seeking the same justice accorded to a girl of their age, says gay rights activist Harish Iyer.

“I principally stand against the death penalty. This discriminatory legislation implies what boys are taught growing up – that they have to be the protector and not the protected. Children are vulnerable to sexual assault, irrespective of gender,” Iyer said.

A nationwide survey of crimes against children conducted by the ministry of women and child development in 2007 found that half of India’s children had been sexually abused.

Iyer said the new executive order was a shortcut for an overhaul of a criminal justice system that often discriminates against the poor. “This is sexism of a different nature, it favours one gender. What about protection of intersex children? Unless the crime is female foeticide, which is specifically gender-oriented, this is a shortcut for real measures.”

He said the government should prioritise fast-track courts, child-friendly police stations, and a national registry of sex offenders. The new law proposes stricter punishment for convicted rapists of children under 16 years of age. Its definition of the victims and proposed age limit has triggered a debate about categorising victims of the same crime.

“What’s the explanation for death penalty for ‘gang rape of children below 12 years’? The state is a man. Why else would the reproductive age of a girl be the determining factor for the kind of punishment meted out to the rapists?” journalist Kota Neelima wrote in a Facebook post.

In 2016 India recorded an alarmingly low conviction rate (18.9%) for crimes against women. In that year, of all the child rape cases that came before the courts under the Pocso, less than 3% ended in convictions.

An issue of such a grave nature should have had a public discourse with participation from civil society stakeholders. By its nature, an executive order can be announced by the president of India on recommendation from the federal cabinet and does not require consultation.

After the gang rape of Jyoti Singh in Delhi in 2012, India introduced tougher rape laws and launched fast-track courts, but the measures have not deterred violent sexual crimes.

In addition, homelessness and poverty increase the vulnerability of children to sexual predators as parents have to leave them on their own to go to work, making them easy targets.

In an election year, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wants to be seen as proactive in taking strong steps to make India safer for women. However, it is implementation, the real challenge in India, that will determine its true intention.

Further reading:

[India's cabinet adopts death penalty for rape of girls under 12](#)

[The death penalty ordinance has no leg to stand on](#)

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GERMANY: How should Germany deal with Islamic anti-Semitism?

By Kersten Knipp

Deutsche Welle (24.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2JkixCf> – There have been multiple instances of attacks and threats against Jews in Germany. What motivates such violence, and what steps must be taken to prevent it?

Rapper Felix Blume, known by his stage name Kollegah, [sparked controversy earlier this month](#) with a song that contained the line: “My body is more defined than those of Auschwitz inmates.” That the line pops up rather abruptly in the song makes it stand out all the more, and has helped to fuel the media firestorm surrounding Blume and his colleague Farid Bang, with whom he recorded the track, titled “Jung Brutal Güttausehend 3” (Young, Brutal, Good Looking 3).

It is not the first time Blume has made reference to Germany’s Nazi era in his music. His earlier music contains lyrics about the “final solution to the rapper question,” the SS and the Wehrmacht.

In their introduction to their anthology “Deutscher Gangsta-Rap,” sociologist Martin Seeliger and social psychologist Marc Dietrich write that a central characteristic of rap is the “presentation of hardness,” the “presentation elements of power fixation,” and “versions of hyper-masculinity.” Anti-Semitism does not necessarily have a history within the genre, but the sales figures of Kollegah’s album indicate that his fan base is still supportive of his work.

A new form of anti-Semitism

The fact that Blume converted to Islam at the age of 15 has fueled the ongoing debate in Germany over Islam and the issue of anti-Semitism. An incident earlier this month in Berlin, in which a [young Syrian man was filmed attacking two other young men wearing kippahs](#) with a belt, sparked uproar in the country.

“Other than the classic anti-Semitism from the right and increasingly the left, anti-Semitism among Muslims poses great challenges to us,” the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Daniel Botmann, said several days ago during a speech in Berlin. It is important to keep in mind that Israel-oriented anti-Semitism is not a problem that only exists in Muslim communities, he went on. “Nonetheless, Muslim communities must credibly and thoroughly fight anti-Semitism within their own ranks and make it their own matter.”

A similar sentiment was expressed back in December by then-Justice Minister (and now Foreign Minister) Heiko Maas. He said the principle that anti-Semitism will not be accepted in Germany must be conveyed “not only to every German student, but also to the people who have come to Germany in the past few months and years as refugees. Many have hardly had any reason to deal with German history. On the contrary, they often come from countries in which the powerful stir up hate for Jews and Israel and anti-Semitism has almost become a cultural matter of fact.”

Countermeasures required

Resolute countermeasures are called for, said Ahmad Mansour, a Muslim social psychologist from Israel, in a German political TV talk show this past weekend – adding that such measures are nowhere in sight. “We don’t offer clear values to the youths and other people who approach us,” he said. “We don’t show them what society expects of them, we don’t tell them why this society won’t tolerate anti-Semitism.”

Demands are twice as high on the society that accepts migrants in their midst in times when some of these migrants apparently do not or at least do not sufficiently deal with the standards of the country they have moved to, but perhaps don't even accept them.

[The Muslim communities have to take a stand](#), too, according to Mansour: "We need mosques that do more than stage vigils, or participate in the German Islam Conference's press conference only to say, that's something we condemn. We need mosques that will say during Friday prayer that in this country, people must not question Israel's right to exist."

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German Muslim leader says anti-Semitism is a sin

Deutsche Welle (24.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2r3nGav> – The head of Germany's Central Council of Muslims has said anti-Semitism is sinful and must be tackled. His comments came after Chancellor Angela Merkel voiced concern about a "new phenomenon" of anti-Jewish sentiment.

Hatred and abuse of Jewish people are against the tenets of Islam, the president of Germany's Central Council of Muslims, Aiman Mazyek, said, adding that the Muslim community had work to do in tackling the problem.

"Anti-Semitism, racism and hatred are great sins in Islam, therefore we will also never tolerate that," Mazyek told the Tuesday edition of the regional newspaper *Rheinische Post*.

The Muslim leader made his comments in response to remarks by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to an Israeli broadcaster at the weekend. [Merkel told Channel 10 News](#) that "refugees and other people of Arab origin are bringing a different form of anti-Semitism into the country."

Mazyek said he accepted that Merkel's comments had been sufficiently "nuanced," recognizing that anti-Semitism had not arrived with refugees. However, he admitted there was a problem.

“We take it very seriously that there is anti-Semitism present among some refugees,” Mazyek told the Düsseldorf-based newspaper. He added that the Central Council was organizing meetings between Jews and refugees, and that it was running educational programs that included visits to memorial sites at former concentration camps.

Merkel had made her comments after reports of several anti-Semitic attacks by Muslims in Germany in recent weeks. In [one instance that was caught on camera](#) last Tuesday, a man was attacked for wearing a Jewish skullcap in Berlin’s Prenzlauer Berg district. The victim, in fact, said he was not Jewish but an Arab Israeli. A 19-year-old Syrian [turned himself in to the police](#) after the attack sparked outrage across Germany.

During her interview, the chancellor also spoke about wider anti-Semitism in German society, saying she found it “depressing” that synagogues and Jewish schools still had to be protected by police around the clock.

President of Germany’s Central Council of Jews Josef Schuster on Tuesday advised individuals in large German cities to avoid wearing headwear such as the kippah or yarmulke where it might invite danger.

Schuster said that “in principle” it would be best to show one’s faith defiantly, as evidenced in a campaign started by the Jewish community entitled “Berlin wears the kippah.”

However, Schuster added: “In spite of this, I would actually

have to advise individuals against openly appearing in large city environments wearing a kippah.”

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ROMANIA: UK to grant controversial extradition to Romania

By Lea Perekrests

HRWF (24.04.2018) 38-year old, London resident, Alexander Adamescu, [may face extradition](#) to Romania in the coming weeks despite a series of corrupt trials and the death of his father in Romanian prison.

Alexander Adamescu's name first became of interest to

Romania's National Anti-corruption Directorate (DNA) in June 2016 following the imprisonment of his father, Dan Adamescu on charges of bribery and corruption.

The charges against Alexander Adamescu arose shortly after the state was slapped with a GBP 200 million arbitration claim for the purposeful destruction of a group of companies controlled by Dan Adamescu.

From the initial charges against Alexander Adamescu, the [hearings and investigations have been riddled with corruption.](#)

For example, in one hearing, Alexander Adamescu was summoned only at the door of the court, thirty minutes prior to the hearing. Within thirty minutes after the trial, the judge had apparently read 37 arch level files of prosecution materials, had deliberated on the arguments of both sides, taken a decision, admitted an arrest warrant, and had submitted his decision on the court electronic system.

Unfortunately, such circumstances are not rare in Romania; concerns regarding fair trials and prison conditions are constants across the country. According to EAW laws, extraditions should not be conducted when human rights abuses are disputable in the receiving country.

Human Rights in Romania – Abysmal prisons and court-room corruption

The increasingly interconnectedness of the National Anti-corruption Directorate (DNA), the national intelligence service (SRI), and judges, magistrates, and other judicial authorities across the country are of high concern.

The wide use of phone-tapping, corruption, influence of judges, and faking evidence have all come to light as common practice within these institutions, which in turn are clear violations of human rights.

These issues are well-known, as the debate in Romania is highly public. The Chief Prosecutor of the DNA is currently being investigated for corruption, and the Secretary General of the SRI is facing calls to resign after the media exposed that he had been contacting judges via Facebook about ongoing trials.

In such a context, is it implausible to assume that those who face charges in Romania will receive a fair trial.

Furthermore, Romania's record of extended and unjustified pre-trial detention, paired with [overcrowded prisons and facilities which do not meet international standards](#), contributes to concern.

In 2017, Romania remained a prolific human rights abuser with the most cases brought before the ECtHR of any EU country, and of the 47 nations of the Council of Europe – Romania fell just behind Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

The majority of these cases involved the prohibition of torture or inhuman treatment, a lack of effective investigation, and the right to a fair trial.

As of 1 January 2018, Romania even surpassed Russia and Turkey in the number of pending applications allocated to the judicial formation.

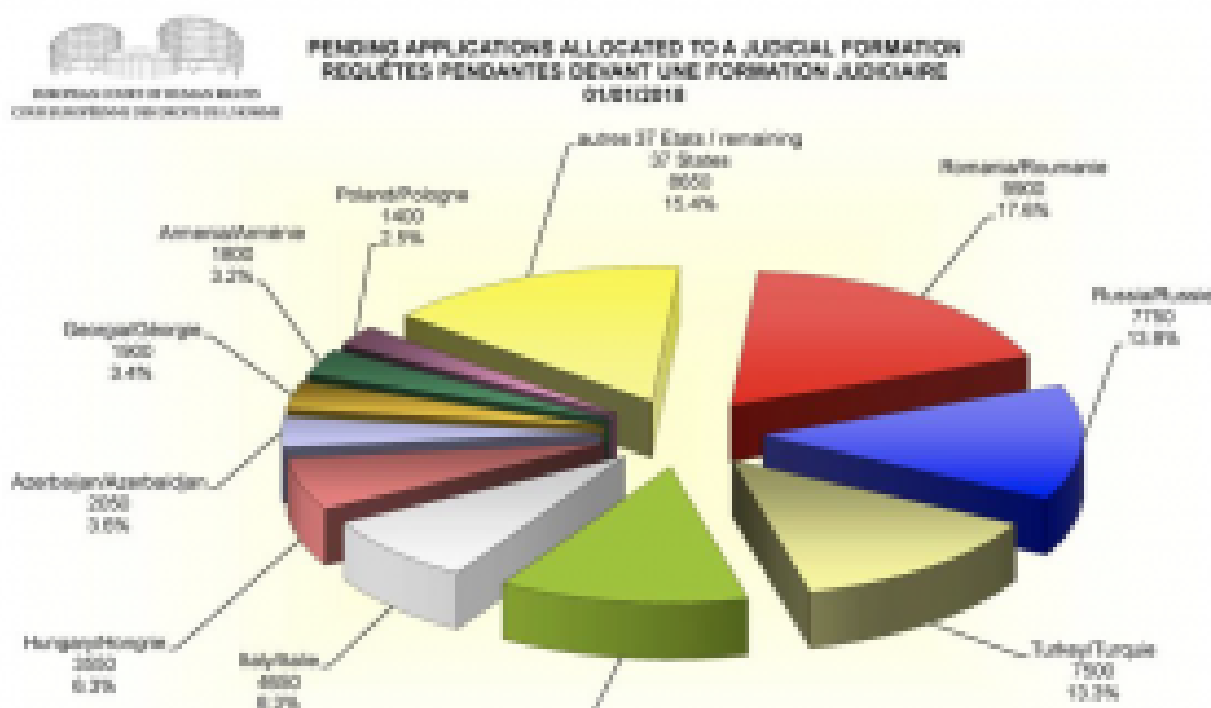


Image source: 'Violations by Article and by State 2017'. European Court of Human Rights. 2018.

http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Stats_violation_2017_ENG.pdf

Given this record, the UK courts would be at contention with EAW laws.

Even more worrying is that if Alexander Adamescu is extradited, he will face grave human rights violations during subsequent trials, and while in prison.

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NORTH KOREA: Over 1,000 North Korean workers slated for

dispatch to China

By Ha Yoon Ah

Daily NK (12.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2FaR3MK> – Over 1,000 North Korean laborers are preparing to be dispatched to work assignments in Dandong, China, a source in the area informed Daily NK on Wednesday. This follows sightings earlier this month of over 400 North Korean workers in the Chinese city of Helong to the east, together suggesting the two countries may be cooperating to restart joint business ventures in China.

“There are already about 100 North Koreans working at one clothing factory in Dandong, and they are expecting 1,000 more after a recent conversation with a manager from the North Korean side,” the source said on April 11.

The Chinese manager in the deal told the source that it is a popular opportunity among North Korean factory workers as they see it as a good chance to improve their skills, despite their expectations of low pay and long hours. “People around here are anticipating an influx of more North Korean workers in the near future,” the source remarked.

A separate source in China confirmed the development, saying, “It is true that over a thousand North Korean workers are preparing for the assignment. The Chinese brokers who have engineered the deal for the jobs are working overtime right now.”

He added that the workers are still receiving permits from North Korean authorities to cross into China, as per standard guidelines, though these permits only technically allow up to 30 days' stay abroad.

"[The Chinese companies] are trying to recruit more North Korean workers now as they feel sanctions may possibly be lifted and that the dangers have subsided. But they will just send them back in case they are not [lifted]," he said.

Following these developments, some are speculating that Kim Jong Un may have come to an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the matter during their meeting in Beijing last month.

Recent friction between China and the US over a brewing trade war may also be contributing to a sense of optimism among those affected in the region.

"We (Chinese people) are also hurting from sanctions, and now it seems like we are in a trade war with the US," an additional source in China said.

"Knowing this, it is possible that authorities, despite sanctions, are turning a blind eye to the arrival of the North Korean workers."

*Translated by Colin Zwirko

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French politicians, celebrities condemn 'new anti-Semitism'

France24 (23.04.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2qQPdeZ> – More than 250 French dignitaries and stars have signed a manifesto denouncing a “new anti-Semitism” marked by “Islamist radicalisation” after a string of killings of Jews, published in the Sunday edition of *Le Parisien* newspaper.

The country's half-a-million-plus Jewish community is the largest in Europe but has been hit by a wave of emigration to Israel in the past two decades, partly due to anti-Semitism.

“We demand that the fight against this democratic failure that is anti-Semitism becomes a national cause before it’s too late. Before France is no longer France,” reads [the manifesto](#) co-signed by politicians from the left and right including ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy and celebrities like actor Gérard Depardieu.

The signatories condemned what they called a “quiet ethnic purging” driven by rising Islamist radicalism particularly in working-class neighbourhoods. They also accused the media of remaining silent on the matter.

“In our recent history, 11 Jews have been assassinated – and some tortured – by radical Islamists because they were Jewish,” the declaration said.

The murders referenced reach as far back as 2006 and include [the 2012 deadly shooting](#) of three schoolchildren and a teacher at a Jewish school by Islamist gunman Mohammed Merah in the southwestern city of Toulouse.

Three years later, an associate of the two brothers who massacred a group of cartoonists at satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo killed four people in [a hostage-taking at a Jewish supermarket](#) in Paris.

In April 2017, an Orthodox Jewish woman in her sixties was thrown out of the window of her Paris flat by a neighbour shouting “Allahu Akhbar” (God is greatest).

The latest attack to rock France took place last month when two perpetrators stabbed an 85-year-old Jewish woman 11 times before setting her body on fire, in [a crime treated as anti-Semitic](#).

Her brutal death sent shockwaves through France and prompted 30,000 people to join [a march in her memory](#).

Condemning the “dreadful” killing, President [Emmanuel Macron](#) reiterated his determination to fighting anti-Semitism.

“French Jews are 25 times more at risk of being attacked than their fellow Muslim citizens,” according to the manifesto.

It added that some 50,000 Jews had been “forced to move because they were no longer in safety in certain cities and because their children could no longer go to school”.

(FRANCE 24 with AFP)

More information :

Le Parisien: <https://bit.ly/2qSuNCt> – <https://bit.ly/2q0X0aH>

L'Express: <https://bit.ly/2HQ0Meq>

Le Vif: <https://bit.ly/2HnkSvH>

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