About anti-Muslim ideologies, anti-Muslim state policies and inter-Muslim hostilities

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HRWF (04.01.2018) – Surveys highlight that in non-Muslim majority countries Muslims often face hostility, stigmatization and discrimination from state and non-state actors. Furthermore, in Muslim-majority countries, the majority Muslim denomination is often responsible for persecution and discrimination against minority Muslim denominations.

Various ideologies underpin global or specific anti-Muslim state policies and social attitudes, including

- a nationalist ideology closely linked to a dominant religion in Myanmar, leading to pogroms, mass killings, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing;

- the Communist ideology enforcing atheism in China, leading to severe restrictions of religious freedom, arrests and imprisonment;

- religiously motivated anti-Muslim ideologies among the Christian right Evangelicals in the United States and in some European Christian majority countries

- populist, extreme-right, fascist or neo-nazi ideologies, such as in Europe and North America

- competing and conflicting theologies inside Islam, each having a different political and social governance agenda, as in Iraq or Syria..

Inter-Muslim hostilities – stemming from theological disputes and struggles for power among various violent Islamist groups – produce innumerable victims of suicide bombings, terrorist attacks, regional conflicts and wars. No global statistics are available on the number of fatalities per religion, but according to a 2011 report from the U.S. government's National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC), Muslims suffered between 82 and 97% of terrorism-related fatalities during the previous five years.

Terrorist and jihadist groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, the Talibans, al-Shaabab and Boko Haram have killed and continue to kill dozens of Muslims every day. Their goal is to impose a totalitarian form of governance inspired by their vision and interpretation of Islam. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) at the University of Maryland (United States), between 2004 and 2013, roughly half of all terrorist attacks and 60% of fatalities due to terrorist attacks took place in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan – all of which have a majority Muslim population.

Sunni communities are oppressed in Iran, a Shia majority country, while the Sunni community in Bahrain oppresses the local Shia minority, and Saudi Arabia, a Wahhabi majority country, persecutes its Shia minority.

When a state opts to recognize one form of Islam, dissidents and reformers may be deemed heretical and persecuted, as is the case in Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, other currents of Islam (such as Sufis, Tablighi Jamaat and Said Nursi) may be banned, even though the groups are nonviolent and pose no problem to the security and the territorial integrity of the state. Their members may be arrested and imprisoned, as is the case in Azerbaijan, Russia, Tajikistan or Uzbekistan.

This list offers a snapshot of anti-Muslim and inter-Muslim persecution around the world.