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After New Zealand massacre, Muslims in Europe fear for their safety

By Martin Banks

New Europe (19.03.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2Cqp90I> - The Christchurch mosque shootings are putting a worldwide spotlight on Islamophobia.

The mass shootings on in New Zealand have left Europe's 19-million-strong Muslim community feeling frightened and vulnerable, which has led to renewed calls for action against the rise of bigotry.

The alleged killer, an Australian man who live-streamed the massacre on Facebook, described himself as a 28-year-old claiming to represent Europeans and whites in a battle against immigrants. The ensuing killing spree that he unleashed on the innocent victims left 50 people dead and another 48 wounded.

European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** tweeted that the EU stood in solidarity with New Zealand and would stand against those who attack the European way of life.

"Whilst an increasing number of EU states adopt policies stigmatising Muslims and social media is infected by anti-Muslim narratives, European leaders must vaccinate their populations against the proliferation of extreme-right ideologies before it is too late," Willy Fautre, the director of Brussels-based rights group Human Rights Without Frontiers, said while speaking with New Europe before adding, "Education and information are key instruments for that purpose. The Australian terrorist said he was inspired by mass killer **Anders Behring Breivik**, a far-right terrorist who killed 77 people in Norway in 2011. Far-right ideologies are the next plague against which we must watch out. Perpetrators of acts of violence or terrorism targeting religious groups or individuals must be heavily sentenced to avoid the import of inter-religious tensions and conflicts in our democratic societies."

British anti-Muslim activist **Tommy Robinson** has been leading a campaign of hate for years and had a million followers on social media before being banned from Facebook and Instagram last month because he repeatedly posted material with Islamophobic hate-speech.

Belgium's Muslim Executive, which represents the interests of the Islamic community in Belgium, has asked the authorities to provide additional security in the wake of the New Zealand attack.

"All mosques and other places of worship are definitely in need of extra protection. We have always been in full support of governmental measures to fight all forms of radicalism, racism and Islamophobia," said Muslim Executive Chair **Mehmet Üstün**, adding, "Recently, we have heard a lot of racism and extremist talk."

Additional security measures have been introduced in France, the Netherlands and the UK, since the New Zealand attack, but not in Belgium.

Islamophobia is on the rise, based on research in eight countries, including the UK, France, and Germany. The report highlighted how hate crimes against Muslims have been tied to the rise of far-right and anti-immigration movements in several EU countries.

These sentiments have been further exacerbated by content spread in the media and a poisonous political discourse in the EU, which is becoming increasingly hostile towards Muslims in many spheres of everyday life.

In countries such as Hungary, which have served as a transit point for many asylum seekers headed for Western Europe, certain populist political parties attempt to portray Muslim as potential terrorists. Even in the UK, which has a long history of diversity and Muslim populations. has found itself the target of hatred in the wake of attacks claimed by groups connected to ISIS.

The report calls on the EU Member States, as well as their policymakers, to play a more active role in the fight against Islamophobia. European policymakers also need to give a signal that they are committed to ensuring equality and inclusion for all members of society.

"This is an issue that is poisoning our societies in the European Union and putting barriers between our communities," said **Jean Lambert**, a UK Green Party MEP.

The Muslim Council of Britain is urging everyone to fight Islamophobia and the European Commission says it is taking proactive action to halt attacks on Muslims by appointing a coordinator that will look into all forms of the anti-Muslim hatred.

Last September, a toolkit was introduced by the EU to fight the rise of Islamophobia in Europe.

But anti-Islamophobia campaigners say recent examples abound of "blatant" Islamophobic violence. In Belgium, a 19-year old Muslim woman was recently attacked by two men who pulled her headscarf and her shirt off, used a sharp object to cut her body and call her a "filthy Arab".

Far-right terrorist attack against two mosques that killed 50 is not the first of its kind

By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (18.03.2019) - Far-right terrorism has a history of promoting anti-Muslim sentiments and perpetrators must face maximum consequences.

On Friday 15 March, 50 people were killed and as many seriously injured in mass shootings at two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch.

Footage of the massacre was live-streamed online, and a rambling manifesto laced with white supremacist references was published just before the shootings took place.

This terrorist attack is all the more heinous because it targeted places of worship during Friday prayers.

The list of victims includes people from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Three people were arrested in connection with the shootings: Australian national Brenton Harrison Tarrant (28), a white supremacist, was charged with murder. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison described the suspect as an "extremist, right-wing, violent terrorist". The court charged a second shooter, 18, with "intent to excite hostility or ill-will."

Far-right terrorism

Brenton Harrison Tarrant said he was "inspired" by mass killer Anders Behring Breivik, a far-right terrorist who killed seventy-seven people in Norway in 2011. Breivik first killed eight people by detonating a van bomb amid Regjeringskvartalet in Oslo. Then, he shot and killed sixty-nine youth who were participating in a summer camp of the Workers' Youth League, affiliated with the Norwegian Labor Party, on the island of Utøya. Although he was anti-Muslim, his terrorist attack was not targeting Muslims. In July 2012, he was convicted of mass murder, causing a fatal explosion, and terrorism. He was sentenced to twenty-one years in prison - particularly preventive detention, which requires a minimum of ten years sentence - with the possibility of one or more extensions for as long as he is deemed a danger to society. This is the maximum penalty in Norway.

On 29 January 2017, anti-Muslim fanatic Alexandre Bissonnette killed six men at a mosque in Quebec City, Canada. He was sentenced to life in prison.

On 19 June 2017, far-right terrorist Darren Osborne killed one person in north London after he plowed a van into a group of Muslims near the Finsbury Park Mosque.

On 5 August 2017, a bomb went off in a mosque in Bloomington (Minnesota) as the faithful were gathering to pray. Luckily, no one was killed. One of the three suspects told authorities he bombed the mosque to "scare" Muslims "out of the country."

In 2018, three men planned to detonate four vehicles filled with explosives to level an apartment complex in Garden City, Kansas, that also accommodated a mosque. The complex was home to many Somali refugees, and the three men not only expressed hatred for them, but also for all "Muslims in general. The three men were sentenced earlier this year to at least twenty-five years in prison.

Far-right ideologies are a plague in society, which we must seriously seek remedies for.

Human Rights Without Frontiers maintains that perpetrators of acts of violence or terrorism targeting religious groups and individuals must face the maximum consequences.



The suspect flashed an upside-down 'OK' signal, a symbol used by white power groups across the globe, in court Saturday

Christchurch terror attacks: What you need to know

DW (15.03.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2JjlaZS> - Two mass shootings at mosques in the New Zealand city have left 50 dead and stunned the world. DW brings you up to speed on the tragic events as details emerge about the right-wing extremist charged in the attacks.

A 28-year-old man suspected of being behind Friday's deadly terror attacks against the Muslim community in Christchurch appeared briefly in court on Saturday, where he faced one charge of murder, with the expectation of more similar charges to come.

The [shooting attacks at two mosques in Christchurch on Friday](#) killed 50 people and injured at least 47, making it the deadliest attack in New Zealand's modern history. It sparked horror and dismay around the world and prompted [international leaders to denounce the Islamophobic violence](#).

What happened

- On Friday, the Muslim day of prayer, a shooter entered the Al Noor Mosque and opened fire with multiple weapons, killing 41 people.
- Around the same time a shooter or shooters also opened fire at the nearby Linwood Mosque, killing seven others. One other died later in hospital, while a 50 victim was found at the first mosque a day later.
- Shortly afterward a livestream video of the attack spread around the world through social media, as Facebook and Twitter worked to remove the video from their platforms.

- Police arrested four individuals in the attacks' immediate aftermath. One was eventually released, one has been charged with murder, and two remain in custody.
- Police also said they had found explosive devices at one mosque, which they secured and detonated.
- They warned people not to go anywhere near mosques in the country.

Suspect details emerge

- Brenton Tarrant, the 28-year-old suspect, has been charged with murder.
 - Before the attacks, Tarrant posted a 74-page manifesto on social media. In it, he identified himself as a white supremacist and a fascist and said he wanted to avenge attacks in Europe perpetrated by Muslims.
 - Tarrant had legally purchased the weapons used in the attack, which included two semi-automatic rifles.
 - He had traveled around the world and lived sporadically in Dunedin, a town outside of Christchurch, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said at a press conference.
 - The Australian government has confirmed the suspect is an Australian citizen.
 - Australian police said the suspect had only been known to them for "minor traffic matters," and he had not been on the intelligence community's radar.
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