By gathering 35 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fifth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 32 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing countries and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regard to Islamophobia across Europe.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens and threaten the whole of society. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2019 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim racism on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fifth edition of our report highlights how European societies are progressively overwhelmed by the Islamophobic discourse of the “Great Replacement” and other far-right conspiracy theories. The 32 country reports demonstrate how governments and mainstream media participate in reproducing such discourses that put the fundamental rights of millions of European citizens in jeopardy and how one can counteract these developments. This compendium of useful insights and data aims to provide European policy-makers, institutions, and NGOs with recommendations on how to tackle anti-Muslim racism in Europe seriously.

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C., Berlin and Brussels. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy-makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain-storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision-making mechanisms.
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ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
CZECH REPUBLIC
NATIONAL REPORT 2019

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Executive Summary

In 2019 we see the continuing trend of mainstreaming and normalising Islamophobia in the public discourse, particularly among politicians and in social media. However, we may say that it takes a new form of total rejection of admitting any refugees in the Czech Republic. Rejecting Muslims and rejecting refugees merged into one complex of hate speech and hostile proclamations by politicians, journalists, artists, public personalities, and social media users. We are in the situation in which the president of the far-right Freedom and Direct Democracy party, which is in parliament, advocates for banning Islam and thus limiting the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of denomination. There is an increasing trend of dealing with hate speech by the state using legal means, perhaps due to the radicalisation of a Czech pensioner who was sentenced for committing a terrorist act inspired by hate towards Muslims. Even though the number and visibility of Muslims and Muslim community organizations remain low, there is general fear and distrust directed at them. This makes the community extremely cautious and limits its capacity to advocate for itself and control the narrative. In most Czech media, every misstep on the part of the community is used against it and against Islam as a religion. The affair with an attempt by citizens, their initiatives, and some politicians to admit 50 orphan children from Greek camps and later the Greek call for admitting unaccompanied minors with health problems show how deep the lack of compassion is for those perceived by the majority as undesirable. Even though there were some 200 families who volunteered to host the children, the politicians from the ruling party ANO and their coalition partner, the Social Democrats, obstructed the process successfully. Due to this type of hostility and radical rejection, the whole society becomes vulnerable to fake news and false alarms spread about Muslims in most media.
Shrnutí

V roce 2019 pokračoval trend normalizace islamofobie, která se zároveň stal součástí hlavního proudu ve veřejném diskuře, zejména mezi politiky a na sociálních sítích. Musíme však zdůraznit, že má novou tvář, která je patrná v naprostém odmítání přijímání uprchlíků Českou republikou. Odmítání muslimů a odmítání uprchlíků splynulo do jakéhosi komplexu hovoru z nenávisti a nepřátelských proklamací politiků, novinářů, umělců, veřejných osobností a uživatelů sociálních sítí. Jsme v situaci, kdy předseda parlamentní strany Svobody a přímé demokracie volá po zákazu islámu a tím i po omezování ústavně zaručené svobody vyznání. Posiluje tendence státu trestat hovor z nenávisti právními prostředky, možná i v důsledku radikalisace, kterou prošel česky důchodce a který byl odsouzen za teroristický čin inspirován nenávistí vůči muslimům. Přestože počet a viditelnost muslimů a muslimské komunity zůstávají nízké, panují všeobecné vůči obojímu strach a nedůvěra. Z toho důvodu je muslimská komunita extrémně opatrná a limitovaná ve svém potenciálu se svých členů a členek zastávat a kontrolovat škodlivý diskuř, který v souvislosti s muslimy dominuje v české společnosti. Většina medií v České republice i sebemenší prohřešek komunity využívá jako nástroj proti této komunitě a proti islámu jako náboženství. Na popud občanů, občanských iniciativ a některých politiků a političek, vzniklá iniciativa tykající se přijetí 50 sirotků z řeckých táborů a později řecké výzvy k přijetí nezletilých bez doprovodu se zdravotními problémy. Přestože se přihlásilo kolem 200 rodin ochotných sirotky ubytovat a postarat se o ně, politici z vládnoucí strany ANO a jejich koaliční partner Sociální demokracie blokovali veškeré kroky k uskutečnění iniciativy, která tím pádem skončila. Tato aféra poukazuje na hluboký nedostatek soucitu s těmi, které majorita považuje za nežádoucí. Díky takovému radikálnímu odmítání je cela společnost více zranitelná pokud jde o falešné a poplašné zprávy, které najdeme v souvislosti s muslimskou komunitou ve většině medií.
Country Profile  
EIR 2019

Country: Czech Republic  
Type of Regime: Parliamentary representative democracy  
Form of Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional republic  
Ruling Parties: ANO 2011 (centrist, populist) and Czech Social Democratic Party (centre-left, populist)  
Opposition Parties: Civic Democratic Party, (centre-right); Czech Pirate Party; Freedom and Direct Democracy (far-right); Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (far-left); Czech Social Democratic Party (centre-left); Christian Democratic Union, (centre-right); TOP 09 (centre-right); Mayors and Independents (local issues party)  
Last Elections: 2018 Presidential election (Miloš Zeman won 51.37% of the vote in the second round); 2017 Legislative election (ANO 2011, 78 seats; Civic Democratic Party, 25; Czech Pirate Party, 22; Freedom and Direct Democracy, 22; Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, 15; Czech Social Democratic Party, 15; Christian Democratic Union, 10; TOP 09, 7; Mayors and Independents, 6)  
Total Population: 10.65 million  
Major Languages: Czech  
Official Religion: No official religion  
Statistics on Islamophobia: For the year 2019 there are no statistics about victims of hate crimes in general or victims of Islamophobia as of yet. According to the Ministry of Interior’s data there were 90 hate-motivated crimes in the first half of 2019. In 2018, this number was 179.  
Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: According to the statistics of the Ombudswoman’s office, for the period 1 January -30 September 2019, there were 186 cases of alleged discrimination of all inhabitants on a variety of grounds. In 2018, this number was 227.  
Major Religions (% of Population): According to the 2011 census: no religion (34.5%), Catholics (10.5%), Protestants (1%), believers with no affiliation to religious institutions (6.8%), undeclared, no answer (44.7%).  
Muslim Population (% of Population): According to the 2011 census 3,358 individuals (0.03%); according to estimates 22,000 (0.2%).  
Main Muslim Community Organizations: Centre of Muslim Communities, General Union of Muslim Students in the Czech Republic, Muslim Union  
Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: In Iustitia (collecting data on hate crimes), OPU (Organization for Aid to Refugees), Czechs Help, We Help People on the Run, ROMEA, Multicultural Centre  
Far-Right Parties: Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)  
Far-Right Movements: We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic, 7. Republika, National Resistance
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Far-Right Terrorist Organisations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices:
- **Hijab Ban**: Limitations at schools and work-regulated by dress codes of the given institutions
- **Halal Slaughter Ban**: None
- **Minaret Ban**: None (depends on local decision)
- **Circumcision Ban**: None
- **Burka Ban**: No specific regulations; however, there are no burqa-clad individuals in the country
- **Prayer Ban**: None
Introduction

In addition to the normalisation and mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the Czech Republic, we can say that in the year 2019 there have been no radical changes. The most important fact for anti-Muslim discourse is its close relatedness to the issue of refugees and particularly to the relocation quotas problem, also documented in the previous report. The Czech Republic remains adamant about not accepting any refugees either in the framework of relocation quotas or on its own. Refugees are perceived almost exclusively as Muslims but also as “non-compatible” citizens coming from sub-Saharan Africa or predominantly Asian Muslim countries. In the Czech Republic, we can see the mixing of Islamophobia and racism (directed mostly at non-white people). In the public discourse, mentioning refugees usually leads to discussing Muslims and Islam in a negative way. The extreme form this approach has reached can be understood from the ongoing affair about admitting orphans or unaccompanied minors who are already in the EU, namely in Greek refugee camps, to the Czech Republic. Civil society backed by a politician from the Christian Democrat Party developed an initiative to admit a few tens of such children. Over 200 families volunteered to accept them. However, they were constantly sabotaged by the prime minister and other politicians until in 2020, the minister of interior said no children would be admitted. In the opinion of this author, this shows how deeply Islamophobia has penetrated Czech society: even children or young adults deserve no compassion or trust but are instead left on their own in terrible conditions in overcrowded refugee camps in Greece. On the other hand, significantly, the 200 or so families who volunteered to accept refugee children and youth show there is resistance to general intolerance and distrust.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

While incidents of physical nature are fortunately relatively rare, incidents of verbal attacks offline and particularly online are very common. There is no systematic collection of such incidents by the police or the non-governmental (NGO) sector. The Czech Ministry of Interior publishes reports entitled “Incidents of Extremism and Prejudice-Based Hatred”,¹ which on the level of incidents cover only those that reach legal threshold. For the period covered in this report, the latest info is for the second quarter of 2019.

Some of the incidents and legal proceedings are of interest to this report. An MP for the rabidly Islamophobic party frequently mentioned in the previous report

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CZECH REPUBLIC

(Freedom and Direct Democracy, SDP), Karla Maříková, compared Muslims to invasive species of plants and animals whose import to the EU is forbidden. She did this on her Facebook page in January 2019. In the report, the Ministry of Interior states that the police started gathering information on possible violation of the Czech law, which forbids incitement of hate against a group of people.

In June 2019, an unsuccessful asylum seeker believed to be of Libyan origin from Germany is alleged to have raped and robbed a Czech woman. He was apprehended and is currently being investigated. This incident provoked numerous and extreme verbal attacks on Muslims, refugees, migrants, and undocumented migrants. As stated in the previous reports, in the Czech Republic, most of the commentators are not anonymous, they comment online under their own names. Perhaps aware that they will not be condemned or seriously punished, they openly compared, in reaction to the rape incident, Muslims to monkeys and pigs. One of the commentators suggested that the Libyan man should be “immediately shot, then sewn into pig skin, put in the coffin made of zinc, and sent to his country of origin with a message that you all will end up like this if you break the law in such an appalling manner”. According to the said report, the Prague police is investigating some of the comments.

Employment

As stated in previous reports on Islamophobia in the Czech Republic, there is no data on employment of Muslims particularly. They are a tiny minority, diverse in their countries of origin, and status in the Czech Republic. They are also frequently employed within their own ethnic group.

Education

In the sensationalistic and biased magazine Reflex, we find an article under the title “Muslims Are Conquering Czech Judiciary; Their Women in Hijab Will Sit in Our Schools”. The article in a very caustic manner reacts to the Supreme Court verdict in the case of the Somali student Ayan Jamaal Ahmednuur. Six years ago, she alleged discrimination on the part of the High School for Nurses in Prague 10 because she was unable to wear a hijab during the theoretical part of the lectures (she agreed to remove the hijab during the practical part). The lower courts sided with the school but the Supreme Court stated that wearing a hijab is her personal choice, which does not endanger anyone and that not wearing a hijab might have a negative impact on the student who can then be in a worse position than other students. The verdict also

3. “Projevy extremismu a předsudečné nenávisti, Souhrnná situační zpráva 2. čtvrtletí roku 2019”.
mentions that schools should teach tolerance and diversity. The verdict means that the lower courts will have to carry out a retrial.

The article, though, first repeats fake news that the student was excluded from the school for not having proper documents, while the student left because of the hijab dispute. It then goes on to mention the negative role of the Ombudswoman (who gave support to the student) and “professional NGOs”, claims that Muslims ask for exceptions from religious neutrality in the Czech educational system, and ends with asking for a Saudi Arab or Qatari Supreme Court verdict in the matter of protection of Christian children in their high schools.

Politics
In high politics not much changed from 2018. The mainstreaming of Islamophobia continues and it is now well-established in the political discourse. In 2019, Islamophobia transformed into a particularly hostile attitude toward refugees. One big ongoing affair is the issue of the relocation of orphans and unaccompanied minors from refugee camps in Greece. Already in 2018, Prime Minister Babiš said that the Czech Republic would not admit any migrants at all, including orphans. He added that the Czech have their own orphans and asked why they should accept Syrian ones. The prime minister is from the populist centre-right party ANO. His opponent was an MP for Christian Democrats, Michaela Šojdrová, who, together with the voluntary citizens’ movement Czechs Help, led the initiative to admit 50 Syrian refugees who were already in Greece. The prime minister’s argument was that Czechs didn’t admit Ukrainian refugees either and that the Czech Republic helps by having already invested 2.5 billion CZK in the hospital in Syria, which also serves Syrian children. Finally, Minister of Interior Jan Hamáček, who initially claimed that the Czech Republic has more than enough capacity to admit 50 orphans, changed his tune and closed the whole affair by saying that “there is no point in admitting 17-year-olds without right to asylum”.

In the meantime, Hlidáci pes, the investigative independent media outlet, found out that Greek Minister of Citizen Protection Michalis Chrysostoidis sent a letter to all EU ministers in August asking them to help by admitting unaccompanied minors who are in Greek camps and who are sick. Hlidáci pes found out that the


7. Ibid.

Czech minister ignored the letter. Prompted by the publicity of the article, Hamáček asked his Greek counterpart for a list of 40 eligible minors. However, it wasn’t clear if he was referring to his previous letter, in which he demanded for a list only with Syrian nationals and only up to 10 years of age. Chrysochoidis replied that no such list could be issued. Hamáček concluded for the Czech public that those who would be relocated would be almost adult males, the group which in his view presents a security threat.9

Media
Most media in the Czech Republic are to be found online, thus, it is difficult to separate this category from the one listed as “Internet”. We will, therefore, focus here on media, and for the section on Internet, on social media.

The media range from reasonably credible (such as Aktuálně.cz, DeníkN.cz - a paid news channel -, Hlidacípes.org, Investigace.cz, Neovlivni.cz, revuebabylon.cz, Romea.cz, A2larm.cz, and Denikreferendum.cz) through to mainstream media (e.g. Czech TV and radio), sensationalistic plus politically biased (Seznam, Seznam TV, Echo, Info, Forum 24, Lidové noviny, iDNES, Novinky) to downright inflammatory (We Don’t Want Islam in the Czech Republic, Aeronet, Eurabia, Parlamentní listy, Pravdive.eu).

A media outlet of particular interest to the issue of Islamophobia is an online outlet called Center for Study of Political Islam (CSPI),10 which in addition to English and Czech has mutations in Hungarian, Slovak, Dutch, Lithuanian, German, Danish, Polish, and Romanian. It is founded by one Bill Warner, who is listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center as part of a core group of “10 Anti-Muslim hard-liners”.11

We will focus here on the Czech version of the CSPI. In the introduction, it defines its character as “a nonprofit, apolitical and nonreligious international educational movement” with a mission to focus on political Islam, e.g. “the part of Islam dealing with kafirs.” It also claims that 51% of the core Islamic doctrine deals with kafirs.12 One of the examples of the CSPI educational approach can be found in the blog entry from 28 September 2019 called “Migration and International Treats as Instrument of Jihad for Spreading of Islam”.13 This organization poses...

10. For further information see their website at https://www.cspii.org/cz
as one which provides rational and objective information on Islamic teaching but actually claims that, according to its books, Islam is necessarily violent and expansive and can be stopped by violence only. One of the main figures in the CSPI leadership mentioned only in the English version is the Czech Milan Podlipný, who frequently blogs on the platform of the above mentioned Parlamentní listy.14

By focusing on the term “political Islam”, Bill Warner contributed to Islamophobia by seemingly separating teaching on kafirs from teaching of Islam in general, and falsely claiming that political Islam does not target Muslims and practicing of their faith.

In a somewhat bizarre feud between internationally infamous fake news outlet Sputnik and the leading Czech Islamophobe and businessman Tomio Okamura, we read about Okamura being attacked for selling halal meat through his online shop. Sputnik in the Czech version rightly calls Okamura out for blatant hypocrisy, which, however, did not impress his followers much. Even though Okamura invited his followers to fight against halal food and boycott kebab, he himself was making a profit from selling halal-certified food. Sputnik attacked him for hypocrisy but not for the battle against halal food in the context of fighting Muslims.15

Justice System

According to ROMEA reporting, “The acquittal of the former chair of the Muslim Community of Prague, Vladimír Sáňka, with respect to the case involving his distribution of a Czech translation of The Fundamentals of TAWHEED (Islamic Monotheism) has now been made definitive. According to InfoSoud, a database of judicial rulings, the Czech Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by Supreme State Prosecutor Pavel Zeman against the acquittal.”16

News server iDNES.cz reports that prosecutors have indicted a man and woman who detectives say made threats against a Muslim couple in Šanov Park in Teplice, Czech Republic in the summer of 2018. The incident happened during an event organised by the Teplice branch of the "Bloc against Islamisation" group. Those attending the event saw a Muslim woman with a baby carriage walking past them and called her vulgar names, after which her husband attempted to discuss their behavior with them. “The 40-year-old man who had verbally assaulted the woman is said to have pulled out a gas pistol, cocked it, and aimed it at the injured party’s husband,” Teplice Police spokesperson Daniel Vítek


said. „According to eyewitness testimony, the man then threatened to kill the Muslim woman’s husband because of his religious faith,“ the spokesperson said. The suspect’s 44-year-old wife has also been indicted for verbally assaulting and threatening the Muslim couple.\textsuperscript{17} Later in 2019, the couple received a suspended sentence and was fined.\textsuperscript{18}

**Internet**

The hotbed of Islamophobia in the Czech Republic is online. It is currently normalised to come upon casual and extreme forms of it. Particularly popular are social media, namely Facebook and Twitter, and YouTube. Overall Islamophobic material can be classified as: (a) insults, humiliation, hostility, calls for violence; (b) fake news, false alarms; (c) manipulation of facts and events in order to stress the negative nature of Muslims and connect it to their faith.

There has been a fusion in public life between Islamophobia and refugee issues. Refugees are often seen as exclusively Muslims. Furthermore, we often come across racism regarding black people from sub-Saharan Africa, even when they are not Muslims. Top and local politicians, and mainstream public opinion and citizens commenting online are united in the rejection of refugees - all refugees, under any conditions. This anti-refugee attitude comes with the rejection of the EU and, in some circles, the glorification of Russia. A particularly strong feature of Islamophobia on the Internet is the generally present view that Western societies are ruined by migration and by yielding to Muslims and their habits (food, dress code, polygamy, etc.). Among the claims about Western European countries is that Muslims are parasites, invited to the West by corrupt or naïve politicians. This fits perfectly into the famous white supremacist conspiracy theory of the Great Replacement. In some circles, Jews are accused of importing Muslims to ruin white people.\textsuperscript{19}

An example of spreading fake news and false alarm can be illustrated by Tomio Okamura’s social media post (on Facebook) in which he was “warning of increasing numbers of acid attacks in Great Britain” and alleging incorrectly that they are being committed by “Muslim immigrants” against women. Okamura used a drastic photograph of a woman who was indeed victimized by an acid attack in 1991, by a native Brit, Kelvin Greenhalgs. The *Daily Mirror* reported last year that Greenhalgs


had disappeared after failing to turn up for a court date and republished photographs of his victim online, which Okamura used.20

The Notre Dame disaster was another source for hoaxes. According to Hlidáci pes, a video of a smiling group of men was combined with the photo of the burning cathedral. It was alleged on the Facebook page of the association Pro-Vlast (For-Fatherland) that this combination means Muslims are celebrating the destruction of the Christian place of worship. In addition, a person who self-identified as Miroslav Provod sent all Czech media an email “full of proof” that the fire was organized by women from so-called ISIS. To crown it all, a hoax spread that a car full of gas bombs was parked in front of the cathedral and that a Muslim girl, disappointed from love, committed the attack.21

The Christchurch mosque terrorist attack was significant for the flood of comments on social media which approved of killing worshipers. Many of the commentators claimed it was a justified revenge for the terrorist attacks committed by Muslims in the West. Jiří Kalvoda from Brno - I would like to reiterate that people comment under their real names - commented as a reaction to the attack on the webpage of media outlet novinky.cz: “No Muslims, no mosques, no problem”. Petr Matys Vraný commented on the Facebook page of Tomio Okamura (SPD): “I do not condemn this!!! At least he showed them we are not afraid of these cripples!!!!”22

President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman sent his condolences to Governor-General of New Zealand Patricia Reddy, in which he confirmed that the Czech Republic strongly condemns the terrorist attack. The prime minister, minister of foreign affairs, minister of interior, and chairs of some parties also condemned the attack.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

One of the central figures in Islamophobic propaganda is half-Czech half-Japanese leader of the parliamentary party Freedom and Direct Democracy Tomio Okamura and his party members. Regarding his party, even the report of the Ministry of Interior on extremism states: “Xenophobic attitudes of the part of the Czech society were skilfully inspired, particularly through social networks, by the party of SDP. The


party (movement) continuously and intentionally provoked the impression that the majority in the Czech Republic is in acute danger of immigration and Islamisation, that it is necessary to start defending ourselves immediately, otherwise we will end up as ‘citizens of second category in our own country’. The SDP representatives took a very proactive stance in commenting on every single registered negative phenomenon both in the Czech Republic and abroad, which was related to migrants or Muslims.”

His party campaigns for a ban of Islam and hijabs, so far has been unsuccessful. As demonstrated throughout this report, Islamophobia runs across party affiliations. Thus Jaroslav Foldyna, from the Czech Social Democrats, is famous for his denial of the Srebrenica genocide.

In addition to politicians and unmentioned in the previous report is an interesting case of a woman who founded an initiative called Angry Mothers. Eva Hrindová is dedicated to the cause of fighting against migration and Islamisation. For example, on her blog we find her article under the title “Women’s Security Is Endangered the Most by Migration and Political Correctness”, in which she claims that the fact that rapes are related to migration is constantly suppressed. She is also a staunch anti-feminist particularly when it comes to feminists calling for tolerance and diversity.

Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

According to the European Council for Foreign Affairs survey conducted in 14 countries of the European Union, the respondents from the Czech Republic identified Islamic radicals and migration as the single biggest threat to Europe today. In such an atmosphere, it is challenging to promote policies or even discourse to counter Islamophobia. That’s why such initiatives deserve special appreciation.

The non-formal movement “Czechs Help” led by Czech truck-driver Jaroslav Miko has already been mentioned. He relentlessly fights for the admission of Syrian orphans and for more tolerance in general. He is joined in this initiative by the aforementioned MP Šojdrová and Martin Rozumek, director of the NGO “Organization for Aid to Refugees”.

23. “Projevy extremismu a předsudečné nenávisti, Souhrnná situacíní zpráva 2. čtvrtletí roku 2019”.
The Initiative Central Station, again, a purely voluntary non-formal association of citizens, provides migrants released from detention camps in the Czech Republic with food, lodging, mobile phones, and tickets to continue their journey to the West. The migrants are caught while in transition to the West, held in detention camps, stripped of all belongings and cash, and released with a deportation order. Without mobile phones they often have no way of knowing where they are.

Finally, the author of this report would like to stress a tiny trend of Muslim community and Muslims fighting against predominantly hostile attitudes towards them. According to Radio Prague, “Imam Leonid Kushnarenko, head of the Prague Muslim Community, has been removed from office and expelled from the community. Both the Czech Muslim Community and its Prague branch distanced themselves from Kushnarenko after he posted a call on Facebook for Muslims to arm themselves in response to the shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand. The head of the Czech Muslim Community Munib Alvari said the vote to expel Kushnarenko had been unanimous.” Kushnarenko is an Ukrainian convert to Islam. Even though there was nothing illegal in his call, it was perceived by the Muslim Community as inflammatory.

Nur Ashraf Bekai, a Palestinian woman from Lebanon, is a beloved teacher of English and civics in the socially excluded location of Předlice, populated mostly by Roma. It is difficult to find teachers for the almost exclusively Roma children school. She wears a hijab and says “discussions about prohibiting the hijab are equally absurd as those forcing women to wear it.”

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

There is continuity in the mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the Czech society. In the realm of politics, with few exceptions the process of othering Muslims is expected and encouraged. In media, there are balanced voices but still very few authentic voices of Muslims from the Muslim community. There are also media whose reason of existence is to spread only the worst stereotypes about Muslims. In the realm of social media, unbridled hate, scare- and conflict-mongering challenge the limitations of freedom of speech and present society with the question of illegality of certain types of speech and fake news. The issue of hatred towards Muslims intensely fused with the issue of refugees and relocation quotas. There are scarce but brave initiatives, particularly in the sphere of civil society that counter the dominant narrative of total rejection. Some Muslims are becoming mildly visible in the Czech society.

In the case of politicians, it is recommended that they be held to the same standard as regular citizens. They need to take responsibility for the damage brought about by the hate they create.

In the case of media, there must be an efficient system of countering fake news. Social networks should be held responsible (also financially responsible) for providing a platform for hate speech.

Civil society organisation should be more persuasive in showing that this is not only an issue of hating Muslims but that Islamophobia, like other forms of hate, endangers the foundations of democracy for everyone.

Finally, Muslims in the Czech Republic and the Muslim community should be encouraged to take control of the narrative and become more visible.

Chronology

- **January 2019:** On Facebook, MP for the Freedom and Direct Democracy party (SDP) Karla Maříková: “It is forbidden to import invasive, non-indigenous species of plants and animals to the European Union. Muslim immigrants are also non-indigenous inhabitants in Europe and the same way as other invasive species they represent unexpected expansion and gradual supplanting of indigenous inhabitants of Europe. Therefore, they should be forbidden from entering the EU.”

- **07.09.2019:** Michal Kraft, assistant to MP for Social Democrats Jaroslav Foldyna: “[The parallel measure should be] immediate deportation of all members of the invasive culture to their country of origin or anywhere else. It is clear today that their integration is impossible (at least in a reasonable time) … this measure should affect all members of the invasive ethnicity regardless of their citizenship just like after WWII…” The last point refers to when Czechs expelled Czech Germans regardless of their citizenship.