

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
POLAND
NATIONAL REPORT 2017

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Executive Summary

In spite of the insistence of the key political figures in the country that the problems of racism and Islamophobia do not exist in Poland, the frequent reporting on verbal and physical attacks on non-indigenous residents of Poland prove the contrary. To a great extent the 'refugee crisis' continues to occupy the political debate in 2017 and Islam, Muslims and refugees are unscrupulously used as a bogeyman in the run for elections. This will very possibly result in Poland being sued by the European Commission in the European Court of Justice. Furthermore, the current changes to the Polish justice system and prosecutors' decisions to discontinue the investigations into a number of hate crimes against Muslims in Poland, does not give an optimistic prognosis for the equal access to justice in the country in the future. The state-funded media outlets seem to carefully select the guests invited to comment on issues related to Islam and its followers, which results in the strengthening of the stereotypical portrayal of a Muslim as 'violent', 'terrorist', 'Jihadist', 'sexist', 'rapist', 'uncivilised', 'double-faced', and, in general 'a threat' to European and Christian values. While the concerns expressed by Muslims are sometimes heard by the state officials, no significant actions to address such anxieties are being made. Independently of the state institutions, however, civil society actors, including some Christian groups, increasingly react to acts of aggression and discriminations against Muslims in the form of systematic as well as spontaneous, ad-hoc initiatives. The number of hate crime attacks on Muslims is on the rise. Muslims were the largest targeted group representing 20% of all cases. Based on the Ministry of Interior statistics, in 2017¹ there were 664 hate crime proceedings where Muslims had been targeted, and 193 (29%) of those resulted in an indictment.

1. The cited numbers cover the period January 2017- October 2017 as at the time of writing the report, the full numbers had not yet been released.

Streszczenie

Pomimo zapewnień ze strony rządu, że problem rasizmu i islamofobii w Polsce nie istnieje, coraz częstsze doniesienia o słownych i fizycznych atakach na osoby wyróżniające się wyglądem świadczą o powadze tego problemu. „Kryzys uchodźczy” w dalszym ciągu zajmuje istotne miejsce w debacie politycznej w 2017 roku, a politycy bez skrępowań posługują się islamem, muzułmanami oraz uchodźcami jako ‘straszakami’ w walce o elektorat. Jest prawdopodobne, że konflikt między Polską a Unią Europejską o nieprzyjęcie uchodźców znajdzie swój finał w Europejskim Trybunale Sprawiedliwości. Obecne zmiany w polskim systemie wymiaru sprawiedliwości, a także decyzje prokuratur o umorzeniu śledztwa w obliczu dużej części doniesień o przestępstwach z nienawiści wobec muzułmanów w Polsce, nie dają optymistycznych prognoz na przyszłość. Reportaże oraz wypowiedzi gości zapraszanych przez stacje telewizji publicznej do komentowania zagadnień związanych z islamem oraz jego wyznawcami, umacniają stereotypowy wizerunek muzułmanina jako ‘terrorysty’, ‘dżihadzisty’, ‘gwałciciela’, człowieka ‘agresywnego’ i ‘niecywilizowanego’, “dwulicowego”, oraz “zagrożenia” dla wartości europejskich i chrześcijańskich. Choć obawy wyrażane przez społeczność muzułmańską docierają do urzędników państwowych, do tej pory żadne skuteczne działania w celu poprawy sytuacji nie zostały podjęte. Niezależnie natomiast od instytucji państwowych, społeczeństwo obywatelskie, w tym niektóre organizacje chrześcijańskie coraz częściej reagują na akty agresji i dyskryminacji wobec muzułmanów w formie działań statutowych organizacji oraz projektów, a także aktów solidarności, np. udziału w manifestacjach. Niniejszy raport ma na celu zwrócenie uwagi na niektóre wydarzenia roku 2017, które w pośredni i bezpośredni sposób wpłynęły na obecną sytuację społeczności muzułmańskich w Polsce. Liczba przestępstw z nienawiści przeciwko muzułmanom rośnie. Muzułmanie byli największą z grup, które doświadczyły takich przestępstw (20% ogółu przestępstw z nienawiści). Według Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, w 2017² liczba zgłoszonych przestępstw przeciw muzułmanom wyniosła 664, a 193 spraw zakończyło się formalnym dochodzeniem.

2. Podane dane dotyczą okresu styczeń–październik 2017, ponieważ w momencie pisania raportu pełne dane za rok 2017 nie zostały jeszcze opublikowane.

Introduction

Since the 2016 report on Islamophobia in Poland, the situation has become even more aggravated. Hate crime is on the rise,³ and the resentment against Muslims and refugees unifies people who normally occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum.⁴ The European Commission has announced its intention to sue Poland at the European Court of Justice for refusing to take in asylum seekers.⁵ The government formed by Law and Justice politicians has become more entrenched in their actions in regard to the refugee quotas, and their refusal to address racism in their own ranks, the media, and society at large. While racism and Islamophobia exist across Europe, Poland is an example of a country where they are not only permitted, but currently actively fuelled by the government and state institutions, as well as the extreme fringes within the Catholic Church, an important player on the Polish socio-political scene. The ecumenical teachings of John Paul II and Pope Francis (who encouraged Catholics, in a 2017 document, to “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate immigrants, refugees, and human trafficking victims”),⁶ have not affected Polish Catholics’ perceptions of Islam.⁷ In other words, Islamophobia has entered the Polish mainstream and become a tool of political warfare.⁸ With over 50% support,⁹ it is likely that the ruling party will remain in power for another term. This means that the situation in Poland regarding Islamophobia and hate crime is likely to deteriorate further. Indeed, this report is a re-statement of problems noted last year¹⁰ with the proviso that they have escalated.

3. Sojda, Aleksandra, “Nawet sto ataków na obcokrajowców dziennie – tak w Polsce kwitnie ksenofobia”, *Polityka* (June 29, 2017) retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/spoleczenstwo/1710550,1,nawet-sto-atakow-na-obcokrajowcow-dziennie-tak-w-polsce-kwitnie-ksenofobia.read>.

4. Gumowska, Aleksandra, “Raport o uchodźcach: Antymuslim robi się modny”, *Newsweek*, no. 28/2015, retrieved January 11, 2018, from <http://www.newsweek.pl/plus/polska/islamofobia-w-polsce-strach-przed-uchodzcami,artykuly,370387,1,z.html>.

5. BBC, “EU to Sue Poland, Hungary and Czechs for Refusing Refugee Quotas”, *BBC NEWS* (December 7, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42270239>.

6. The Vatican Migrants and Refugees Section, “Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points”, retrieved on January 11, 2018 from https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/stocktaking_holy_see.pdf.

7. Makowski, Jarosław, “Jak to możliwe, że w Polsce mamy islamofobię bez muzułmanów?”, *Newsweek* (January 26, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.newsweek.pl/opinie/jak-to-mozliwe-ze-w-polsce-mamy-islamofobie-bez-muzulmanow-,artykuly,404172,1.html>.

8. Matzke, Małgorzata, “„Die Zeit” o Polsce: Islamofobia stała się mainstreamem”, *DW.com* (November 12, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.dw.com/pl/die-zeit-o-polsce-islamofobia-sta-si%C5%82a-si%C4%99-mainstreamem/a-41346351>.

9. Newsweek, “Padł rekord. Już co drugi Polak chce głosować na PiS”, *Newsweek* (December 13, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/polityka/50-proc-poparcia-dla-pis-u-rekordowy-sondaz-faktu-,artykuly,420405,1.html>.

10. Pędziwiatr, Konrad, *Islamophobia in Poland: National Report 2016*, in: Enes Bayrakli & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul, SETA, 2017, retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/POLAND.pdf>.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

The relationship of the Polish state and the Muslim community under the Law and Justice Party (PiS) government continues to be fraught. The nationwide anti-refugee attitudes, fuelled by the continued refusal of the Polish government to accept refugees from Muslim countries and a backlash by the state-controlled media are decidedly on the rise.¹¹ These attitudes translate into a fast-growing number of hate crime incidents, including physical and verbal abuse as well as vandalism. In early summer 2017, the leaders of Polish Muslim organisations including the Muslim Association of Poland, the Muslim League of Poland, and the Muslim Students' Society in Poland wrote an open letter to the speaker of the Polish Parliament as well as to the Parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities requesting support. There was no immediate response to it. In the letter, the Muslim community warned that misrepresenting Islam in the state media, and the continued anti-refugee campaign is very likely to lead to a rise in physical attacks on Muslims.¹² The government's refusal to address this issue is not surprising as xenophobic rhetoric is part of its political programme. The House of Parliament itself was also a site of both organised and spontaneous Islamophobic incidents: in June, a conference about Islam was organised in the parliament by a ruling party's MP, Tadeusz Dziuba, during which not a single Muslim spoke about the religion - instead, a motley of conservative activists and academics discussed Islam as an intrinsically fundamentalist ideology that presents a danger to Poland. It is impossible to discuss all incidents in detail here due to space limitations; however, they often share a common denominator: they are largely ignored by the ruling party who say that hate crime incidents are rare and do not constitute a serious problem in Poland.¹³ However, even cursory research into the situation of Muslims and foreigners in general in Poland belies that claim. In November, again the parliament was a site of an Islamophobic excess whereby an unidentified man wore a T-shirt that read 'Racist. Xenophobe. Patriot. Poland with-

11. Gumowska, Aleksandra, "Raport o uchodźcach: Antymuslim robi się modny", *Newsweek*, no. 28/2015, retrieved January 11, 2018, from <http://www.newsweek.pl/plus/polska/islamofobia-w-polsce-strach-przed-uchodzcami,artykuly,370387,1,z.html>.

12. Chłodowski, Maciej, "Polscy muzułmanie czują się zagrożeni. Apelują do polskiego Sejmu", *Wyborcza.pl* (September 17, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/7,35241,22384133,pols-cy-muzulmanie-czuja-sie-zagrozeni-apeluja-do-polskiego.html>.

13. Fejfer, Kamil, "'W 2016 były o trzy przestępstwa z nienawiści mniej niż w 2015'. I trzy razy więcej niż w 2014", *OKO.press* (January 6, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://oko.press/2016-byly-o-przestepstwa-nienawisci-niz-2015-razy-wiecej-niz-2014/>; Agerholm, Harriet, "Poland Insists Far-right Marchers Calling for 'Islamic Holocaust' Just Sideshow to 'Great Celebrations of Poles'", (November 14, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-far-right-demonstrations-great-celebration-warsaw-neo-nazis-white-supremacists-a8053516.html>.

out Islam'. Having walked around the building for some time unhampered, he was able to get away without any consequences despite this act being punishable by law.¹⁴ The occasional protests of the opposition who admit that racism in Poland presents a significant challenge are ineffective. The ruling party dismisses such protests as left-wing ideology aimed at undermining the government. As a result, Muslims and other minorities have become a bargaining chip in Polish politics.

Justice System

The reform of the Polish judiciary system which has recently resulted in unprecedented disciplinary measures by the European Union¹⁵ means that one of the foundations of a democratic state – the separation of powers – is seriously compromised. The judiciary and prosecutors are now controlled by the executive power, that is, the government ministers. This may (and some, like the Centre for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia, argue it already has¹⁶) present Muslims living in Poland with a new challenge. As the prosecutor's office has become politicised, hate crimes, normally prosecuted *ex officio* (automatically), are ignored.¹⁷ Similarly, there are signals that the police refuse to take action on hate crime reports.¹⁸

Employment

Antidiscrimination employment laws in Poland are largely dictated by EU laws. In March 2017, the European Court of Justice ruled that employers would be able to prohibit the wearing of religious symbols by their employees. This was despite the content of Article 9 (about freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Although the new ruling refers to all religions, the fact that the new ruling was instigated by the appeals against member state courts' rulings regarding complaints by two Muslim women to the European Court of Justice suggests that Muslims may be its intended target. This will not improve the inequalities in the Polish workplace where visible Muslim symbols may trigger Islamophobic discrimination. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for Polish Muslim female converts, even university graduates, client-facing roles are often out of bounds; the most frequently employment undertaken by these Muslim women in the private sec-

14. Gazeta.pl, "Załóżyl w Sejmie rasistowską koszulkę. Politycy PO chcą kary: To sprawa dla prokuratury", *Gazeta.pl* (November 16, 2017) retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114884,22656393,zalozyl-w-sejmie-rasistowska-koszulke-politycy-po-chca-kary.html>.

15. BBC, "Poland Judiciary Reforms: EU Takes Disciplinary Measures" (December 20, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42420150/>.

16. Ośrodek Monitorowania Zachowań Rasistowskich i Ksenofobicznych, post from January 6, 2018, retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://www.facebook.com/osrodek.monitorowania/>.

17. Sikorska, Zofia, "Bilewicz: PO? PIS? Nieważne. Tyle nienawiści nie było w Polsce od dawna", *Krytyka Polityczna.pl* (May 4, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://krytykapolityczna.pl/kraj/bilewicz-mowa-nienawisci/>.

18. Sulowski, Kacper, "Opluta muzułmanka zawiadamia niemiecką policję. Z Warszawy i Berlina płyną gesty solidarności" *Wyborcza.pl* (July 1, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://lublin.wyborcza.pl/lublin/7,48724,22037881,opłuta-muzułmanka-zawiadamia-niemiecka-policje-z-warszawy-i.html>.

tor is work at call centres.¹⁹ It appears that a group who are definitely at risk is food outlet workers, for example kebab shop employees, as demonstrated by the attacks listed in the Chronology section.

Education

In September 2017, qualitative research commissioned by the Commissioner of Human Rights on the attitudes among Polish secondary school students was published. The findings reveal strong anti-refugee, Islamophobic and homophobic prejudice among the majority of the 396 respondents.²⁰ More specifically, the youth tend to view Muslims as potential terrorists and do not wish to welcome Muslim refugees. This attitude was prevalent among students regardless of age, location, or type of school. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Education has decreed that from September 2017, anti-discrimination programmes in Polish schools will be shut down despite the glaring need for such initiatives as shown by the CHR research. Instead, educational initiatives promoting patriotism and a national and cultural Polish identity have been introduced.²¹ This inward trend is amplified by the lack of objectively taught religious education classes in Polish schools as, for example, is typical in the UK state schools (instead, the students usually have a choice of Catholic instruction or ethics classes).²² Therefore, one can only expect the xenophobic attitudes among Polish students documented by the CHR to intensify.

Media

The TV channels that remain at the forefront of the production of Islamophobia in Poland are the state-sponsored TVP (Polish Television) and Telewizja Republika - but they are not limited to them. Essentialist descriptions of Islam and Muslims are broadcast on the news, in documentary and investigational series,²³ current affairs programmes, etc. On June 5, on the TVP Info's programme *News* a two-minute report entitled 'Europe in Ramadan' aired, which presented the Islamic holy month as a time of increased terrorist attacks in Europe. In the programme, Wojciech Szewko (PhD) quotes former spokesperson of IS (Islamic State) as a representative of Islam, saying that Ramadan is a

19. Kaleta, Ewa, "Odczepcie się od mojej chustki". Polki w hidżabie" *wp.pl* (December 5, 2015) retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://kobieta.wp.pl/odczepcie-sie-od-mojej-chustki-polki-w-hidzabie-5982315640255105a>.

20. Gajos-Kaniewska, Dorota, "RPO: młodzież nie chce uchodźców – wyniki badania wśród uczniów szkół średnich" *Rzeczpospolita* (September 6, 2017) retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.rp.pl/Edukacja-i-wychowanie/309069922-RPO-mlodziez-nie-chce-uchodzcow---wyniki-badania-wsrod-uczniow-szkol-srednich.html>.

21. Newsweek, "Patryzizm – tak, tolerancja – nie. Prawicowa ideologia od września wchodzi do polskich szkół" *Newsweek* (July 7, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/konieczajaciami-antydystryminacyjnymi-w-szkolach-edukacja-narodowa-wedlug-pis,artykuly,412809,1.html>.

22. Woleński, Jan, "Wszystko, czego nie wiemy o lekcjach religii: Kto i za co właściwie płaci?", *Polityka* (February, 1, 2016), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/1649200,1,wszystko-czego-nie-wiemy-o-lekcjach-religii-kto-i-za-co-wlasciwie-placi.read>.

23. For example: TVP Info, "Magazyn Śledczy Anity Gargas", (September 6, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://vod.tvp.pl/video/magazyn-sledczy-anity-gargas,06092017,33625209>.



Figure 1: "We hold two books in our hands: first is the Bible about love, second is the Koran about hatred and terror."²⁷

an descent, in which he smashes bottles of alcohol in a shop.²⁵ The author of the report comments on the scene as if it was real and describes it as "a radical protest of an Islam follower as registered in one of the shops in France."²⁶

TVP's *After Eight (Minęła 20)*, a daily, current affairs broadcast, frequently hosts guests known for their Islamophobic opinions. On June 6, 2017, the studio guests were Miriam Shaded, Colonel Piotr Wroński, and historian Jerzy Targalski (PhD). The host began with the question "What is happening now in Europe? Migratory crisis? War on terror? Or maybe war on Islam?" Miriam Shaded immediately responded, "With Islam".²⁸ Shaded would later add "Muslim kids are taught to hate us, to despise European and Western societies".²⁹ During the programme the Qur'an was called a "book of hatred and intolerance" (Fig. 1) as well as the "work of Satan".³⁰ On other occasions the guest was Wojciech Cejrowski, who gave ideas on how to fight Islamic terrorists, that is "to kill them with bullets soaked in swine blood" and then "to desecrate their corpses with it";³¹ and Dariusz Oko, a priest and professor, who claimed that Prophet Muhammad practiced "a little holocaust, anywhere Islam entered, there was a violence and rape"³² (Fig. 2).

24. TVP Info, *Wiadomości*, (June 5, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://www.tvp.info/32525749/najciekawsze-materialy/europa-w-czasie-ramadanu/>.

25. Link to the Yacine Hasnaoui YouTube video retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sxUqi2FQKs>.

26. TVP Info, *Wiadomości*, (June 5, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://www.tvp.info/32525749/najciekawsze-materialy/europa-w-czasie-ramadanu/>.

27. Screenshot from the TV Info programme *Minęła 20*, retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://vod.tvp.pl/video/minela-dwudziesta,06062017,30794782>.

28. TVP Info, "Minęła 20", (June 6, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://vod.tvp.pl/video/minela-dwudziesta,06062017,30794782>.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. TVP Info, "Minęła 20", (October 5, 2017), retrieved on December 30, 2017, from <https://www.tvp.info/34280031/zwlaki-trzeba-bezczescie-swinska-krwia-strzelac-maczana-w-niej-kula>.

32. TVP Info, "Minęła 20", (December 26, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://vod.tvp.pl/video/minela-dwudziesta,26122017,35099962>.

In the mood of ‘discovering the truth’ about Islam a conversation took place between Tomasz Terlikowski, the host of the *Clash of Civilizations* programme aired on Telewizja Republika, and his guest, Sandra Salomon, a Palestinian and former Muslim, who explained that she left Islam once she realised that it is “a violent system”.³³

The open letter, sent in June 2017 by recognised

Polish Muslim associations to the speaker of the Polish Parliament, in which they complained over the misrepresenting and essentialist reporting on Islam and Muslims in Polish state media, was received also by TVP and the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT). While in July, TVP responded that such allegations are unfounded, and that TVP does not hold responsibility for the opinions of the guests invited to the studio, in November, the KRRiT responded to the letter’s authors with a reference to TVP’s position on the issue and confirmed the allegations. Thereafter, no action has been taken to address TVP’s coverage of Muslims.

Physical and Verbal Attacks

Despite the unlawful reluctance of prosecutors and the police to pursue hate crime, according to statistics released by the National Prosecutor’s Office, in the first half of 2017, 947 hate crime proceedings were conducted,³⁵ compared to 863 such proceedings in the first half of 2016. Muslims were the largest targeted group: they constituted 20% of the cases. Based on the Ministry of Interior statistics, in 2017, there were 664 hate crime proceedings where Muslims had been targeted, and 193 (29%) of those resulted in an indictment. There is an agreement among third-sector activists that these numbers are steadily escalating. Meanwhile, the Minister of Justice Mariusz Blaszczak claims that Poland has no problem with hate crime, despite the fact that in 2015 there



Figure 2: “Priest professor D. Oko: Muhammad practices a little Holocaust, anywhere Islam entered, there was a violence and rape.”³⁴

33. Telewizja Republika, “Starcie cywilizacji”, (August 28, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://telewizjarepublika.pl/sandra-salomon-to-co-dzisiaj-sie-w-europie-nie-jest-migracja-tylko-inwazja-to-czesc-wiekszego-planu,53136.html>.

34. TVP Info programme *Minęła 20*, retrieved December 30, from <https://www.tvp.info/35362811/ks-prof-d-oko-mahomet-potrafil-jednego-dnia-zrobic-maly-holocaust-wszedzie-gdzie-wchodzil-islam-byla-przemoc-i-gwalt>.

35. Koźmiński, Paweł, “Coraz więcej przestępstw z nienawiści. Prokuratura Krajowa opublikowała dane”, *Wyborcza.pl*, (January 5, 2018) retrieved January 11, 2018, from <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,22861475,coraz-wiecej-przestepstw-z-nienawisci-prokuratura-krajowa-opublikowala.html>.

were three times as many incidents as in 2014.³⁶ According to Muslim organisations met by the Commissioner of Human Rights in 2016, the scale of the attacks is much larger than the statistics – those should be multiplied by five to gauge the real scale of Islamophobia in Poland, as the victims often do not report attacks.³⁷

It appears that the indigenous Polish Muslim population (Tatars) may have less experience of Islamophobia than more recent arrivals who are likely to stand out in terms of looks and dress in Polish urban areas.³⁸ Some selected attacks are listed in the Chronology section; most never make it to the mainstream media, but the following is an illustrative example. A Muslim student from Germany visiting Poland as part of a school trip to the concentration camp in Majdanek (near Lublin) was spat at by an aggressive male. Throughout the visit, female members of the group, especially those who wore a hijab, were constantly harassed and verbally abused by passers-by in Lublin. Strikingly, the police displayed an odious degree of passivity – a police patrol to whom the group reported the attack ignored the report, and another patrol they approached only reacted with laughter. Eventually the student reported this hate crime to the German police upon her return to Germany.³⁹



Figure 3: "Shock! The islamisation has been planned for 17 years! Scandalous documents of UN leak!"⁴⁰

Internet

The cyberspace is a fertile ground for the hate speech. According to the statistics of the National Prosecutor's Office for the first half of 2017, 39.5% of all hate crimes in Poland (including crimes against different national, ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities) were com-

36. Fejfer, Kamil, "W 2016 były o trzy przestępstwa z nienawiści mniej niż w 2015. I trzy razy więcej niż w 2014", *OKO.press*, (January 6, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018, from <https://oko.press/2016-byly-o-przestepstwa-nienawisci-niz-2015-razy-wiecej-niz-2014/>.

37. Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, "O sytuacji Polaków muzułmanów i muzułmanów w Rzeczypospolitej na spotkaniu Adama Bondara w Biurze RPO", *bip.rpo.gov.pl*, (June 21, 2016), retrieved January 11, 2018, from <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/o-sytuacji-polskich-muzulmanow-i-muzulmanow-w-rzeczypospolitej-na-spotkaniu-adama-bodnara>.

38. WP Wiadomości "Muzułmanie w Polsce. 'Życie tutaj jest dżihadem'", *WP Wiadomości*, (March 13, 2015), retrieved on January 11, 2018, from <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/muzulmanie-w-polsce-zycie-tutaj-jest-dzihadem-6027728982172289a>.

39. Łankowski, Grzegorz, "Tylko w WP. Opluta muzułmanka zawiadamia niemiecką policję. Jest sześciu świadków" *WP Wiadomości*, (June 30, 2017), retrieved on January 11, 2018, from <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/tylko-w-wp-opluta-muzulmanka-zawiadamia-niemiecka-policje-jest-szesciu-swiatek-6139108937754753a>.

40. Screenshot from wRealu24.pl, retrieved December 30, from <https://wrealu24.pl/szok-islamizacja-byla-zaplanowana-juz-17-lat-temu-wyciekly-skandaliczne-dokumenty-onz/>

mitted in cyberspace.⁴¹ Although this figure is lower if compared with the first half of 2016 (49%),⁴² according to Hejststop⁴³ (Hate Stop) the numbers of crimes continuously grow, while the reporting of those to the police has dropped. Hejststop suggests that one of the main reasons for the dropping figures is the Polish government's lack of financial support⁴⁴ for the organizations that used to report hate crimes on behalf of the victims. These organizations, therefore, cannot work as efficiently as they were able to in the past.⁴⁵

The role of the language and pictures that circulate in cyberspace can hardly be overestimated in the increase and strengthening of the Islamophobic attitudes among Polish Internet users. The websites known for fake news, such as *wRealu24.pl*, *wpolityce.pl*, *wsieci.pl*, *fronda.pl*, *chnnews.pl*, *ndie.pl*, *polskaligaobrony.org.pl*, and YouTube channels such as Religia Pokoju (Religion of Peace)⁴⁷ or Marcin Rola,⁴⁸ attract viewers with shouting headlines like "The Real Face of Islam", "The Hidden Truth Exposed", "The Real Threat of Shari'ah", etc., as well as pictures of the beheading of Christians, the beating and raping of girls by violent Muslim men, migrants flooding European streets, etc. (Figs. 3-5)



Figure 4: "Daughter and wife raped in front of his eyes. A Christian man could not handle this."⁴⁶

41. Prokuratura Krajowa, "Wyciąg ze sprawozdania dot. Spraw o przestępstwa popełnione z pobudek rasistowskich, antysemickich lub ksenofobicznych prowadzonych w I półroczu 2017 roku w jednostkach organizacyjnych prokuratury", (December 20, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://pk.gov.pl/sprawozdania-i-statystyki/wyciag-ze-sprawozdania-dot-spraw-o-przestepstwa-popolnione-z-pobudek-rasistowskich-antysemickich-lub-ksenofobicznych-prowadzonych-w-i-polroczu-2017-roku-w-jednostkach-organizacyjnych-prokuratury.html#.WIMUmt-nHIU>.

42. Prokuratura Krajowa, "Wyciąg ze sprawozdania dotyczącego spraw o przestępstwa popełnione z pobudek rasistowskich, antysemickich lub ksenofobicznych prowadzonych w I półroczu 2016 r.", (October 14, 2016), retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://pk.gov.pl/sprawozdania-i-statystyki/wyciag-ze-sprawozdania-dotyczacego-spraw-o-przestepstwa-z-nienawisci-i-2016.html#.WIKB29-nHIU>, retrieved January 7, 2018.

43. More information available at <http://hejststop.pl/>.

44. The financial support ended after April 2016, when the agreements for Norway Grants managed by the Stefan Batory Foundation expired.

45. Hejststop, post from December 7, 2017, retrieved on January 7, 2018, from <https://www.facebook.com/zobacz-nienawisc/posts/1680183208705546>.

46. Screenshot from *Fronda.pl*, retrieved December 30, from <http://www.fronda.pl/a/zgwalcili-corke-i-zone-na-jego-oczach-chrzescijanin-nie-wytrzymal-1,90562.html>

47. Channel opened on May 24, 2017. Up to January 8, 2018, the channel has posted 256 videos and was viewed 5,511,390 times. Retrieved January 8, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTsrpTccVe0uWusYOJN-SXOg/about>.

48. On January 8, 2018, the channel had gathered over 80,200 subscribers. Retrieved on January 8, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjFvWmiZnEtdPAD008RzYPA>.



Figure 5: "Horror! Sweden accepts pedophilia, and all this because of the shariah law"⁴⁹

ers⁵² (60,000 on December 30, 2016); while the Polish anti-racist group 'Yes for refugees – No to racism and xenophobia' gathers only 10,673 followers (8,000 in February 2017). While the number of followers of the later increased by 2,673 members, the anti-Muslim groups increased (in the above order) by 28,571 members and 4,482 members during 2017.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

The landscape of central figures in the Islamophobia network in Poland have not changed significantly since the 2016 EIR report. The ultra-nationalist movements continue to use refugees and Islam among the major elements of their mobilisation. The Polish National Movement (Ruch Narodowy), the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo Radykalny), and the All-Polish Youth (Młodzież WszechPolska) all took part in the November 11 Independence Day march in Warsaw,⁵³ where slogans "We don't want Islam, we don't want Muslim terrorists" were shouted.⁵⁴ (Fig. 6) Sixty thousand people were reported to have attended this year's march.⁵⁵

49. "Screenshot from Telewizja Republika, retrieved December 30, from <http://telewizjarepublika.pl/zgroza-szwecja-akceptuje-pedofilie-a-wszystko-przez-szarija,45435.html>

50. Pędziwiatr, Konrad, *Islamophobia in Poland: National Report 2016*, in: Enes Bayraktı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul, SETA, 2017, retrieved January 8, 2018 from <http://www.islamophobiacentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/POLAND.pdf>.

51. Ndie Facebook page, retrieved January 7, 2018, from <https://www.facebook.com/ndiepl/>.

52. Stop Islamizacji Europy Facebook page, retrieved January 7, 2018, from <https://www.facebook.com/Stop-islamizacji-Europy-191777667634248/>.

53. Organised by the Independence March Association, <https://marszniepodleglosci.pl/>.

54. TVN24, "Młodzież, którą PiS rozumie. Ekscyty wszechpolsaków uchodzą im na sucho", *TVN24*, (November 13, 2017) retrieved January 8, 2018, from <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/separacja-rasowa-nie-pierwszy-incident-w-mlodziezy-wszechpolskiej,789812.html>.

55. It is noted, that the march was attended also by non-Polish members of foreign ultra-nationalist groups from Hungary, Sweden, Slovakia, Italy, and others. Retrieved of January 8, 2018, from <https://www.wprost.pl/kraj/10086012/zagraniczne-media-krytycznie-o-marszu-niepodleglosci-to-zc-odbywa-sie-w-akurat-w-warszawie-to-paradoks.html>.

TVP and Television Republic constitute perhaps the most extensive catalogue of media figures in the Islamophobia network in Poland. Guests invited to speak about Islam, Muslims and refugees are individuals known for their anti-Muslim rhetoric. To name a few: Miriam Shaded, the president of Estera Foundation, who recently stated that all Muslims should be registered in special governmental databases;⁵⁷ Tomasz Terlikowski,⁵⁸ editor and among the hosts of the programme *Clash of Civilizations* on Television Republic, and the author of the book *Caliphate Europe*,⁵⁹ Marcin Rola,⁶⁰ chief editor of *wRealu24.pl*; Witold Gadowski,⁶¹ an investigative journalist; priest Prof. Dariusz Oko,⁶² lecturer at Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.

The Europe of the Future Association (*euroislam.pl*) remains the most important actor of legitimising Islamophobia by juxtaposing Islam with notions of enlightenment, human rights and democracy. The analyses published on *euroislam.pl* are given a 'scholarly' face by the academic credentials of active members of the network, who are invited to public talks, or to comment on current affairs in mainstream media outlets.

Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

In 2017, Polish Commissioner of Human Rights, or the Ombudsman, Adam Bodnar continued to raise concerns about the exacerbated situation of Muslims



Figure 6: Muslim refugees depicted as a Trojan horse - Banner at the Polish Independence march on November 11, 2017 in Warsaw.⁵⁶

56. Source: <https://www.tvp.info/34793656/liderzy-ruchu-narodowego-rasizm-jest-nam-obcy-a-sprzeciw-wobec-imi-gracji-jest-nam-bliski>

57. *Polsatnews.pl*, "Wszystkich muzułmanów należy rejestrować". Miriam Shaded w 'Skandalistach' *Polsatnews.pl*, (December 2, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2017-12-02/miriam-shaded-w-skandalistach-w-polsat-news-o-2000/>.

58. Television Republic Channel on YouTube, retrieved January 8, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UJLsKfLrL8>.

59. In his book published in 2016, Terlikowski warns about the Islamisation of Europe. The book is sold in the biggest bookstore chain in Poland, Empik.

60. Television Republic Channel on YouTube, retrieved January 8, 2018, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YTCoaf7Xp8>.

61. Television Republic Channel on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAivH2MInTQ&t=406s>, retrieved January 8, 2018.

62. In late November, Oko gave a talk titled 'Islam as a Threat to Poland, Europe and Christianity' at a Poznan parish. Retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://poznan.wyborcza.pl/poznan/7,36001,22697553,ksiadz-oko-z-islamofobicznym-wykladem-w-poznanskiej-parafii.html>.

in Poland.⁶³ On February 28, he met with representatives of Muslims of multiple ethnic and national backgrounds as well as members of various political parties from the left to the far-right.⁶⁴ The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the detrimental effects of treating the refugees and Muslims as a bargaining chip to win the electorate.⁶⁵ This potentially productive meeting, however, did not appear to offer any significant improvements, and in June, the established Polish Muslim organizations sent the previously mentioned letter to the Polish state representatives. The Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities invited Muslim organizations' delegates to discuss their concerns during the committee's meeting on December 7. While no concrete decisions were made, the committee requested from the Muslim delegation to provide them the data on the hate crimes concerning the Muslim community in Poland.

Civil society has shown more efforts to push back against anti-Muslim and anti-refugee narratives than state-level institutions. The NGOs Never Again⁶⁶ (Nigdy Więcej), Hate Stop⁶⁷ (Hejtstop), and the Centre for Monitoring Racist and Xenophobic Behaviours⁶⁸ (Ośrodek Monitorowania Zachowań Rasistowski i Ksenofobicznych), together with the campaign 'Zero Tolerance'⁶⁹ (Zero Tolerancji) by the political party Party Together (Partia Razem), continue their systematic engagement in monitoring online and offline hate crime.

Regarding systematic initiatives, civil society also actively responded to the ongoing Islamophobic events in Poland. In June, almost 300 citizens of the city of Poznań came together in a 'Silent Demonstration' to protest the hate campaign against Poznań's imam Youssef Chadid. Imam Chadid received death threats after a fake video of him was published online, in which he supposedly called for hatred

63. That meeting was preceded with another on February 1, when the Ombudsman hosted a discussion on the report on hate speech and the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Polish press. Retrieved January 7, 2018 from <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/sniadanie-prasowe-na-temat-jezyka-prasowego-opisujacego-spolecznosc-musulmanska-w-polsce>.

64. Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, "Mowa nienawiści: spotkanie polityków i przedstawicieli środowiska muzułmańskiego w Biurze RPO" *bip.rpo.gov.pl* (February 28, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2017 from <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-nienawi%C5%9Bci-spotkanie-polityk%C3%B3w-i-przedstawicieli-%C5%9Brodowiska-muzu%C5%82ma%C5%84skiego-w-biurze-rpo>.

65. Responding to Muslims' fear and anxiety about the current anti-Muslim attitudes, Janusz Korwin Mikke, a member of the European Parliament, responded by saying, "To win the election, I have to incite hatred towards refugees". Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, "Mowa nienawiści: spotkanie polityków i przedstawicieli środowiska muzułmańskiego w Biurze RPO" *bip.rpo.gov.pl*, (February 28, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2017, from <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-nienawi%C5%9Bci-spotkanie-polityk%C3%B3w-i-przedstawicieli-%C5%9Brodowiska-muzu%C5%82ma%C5%84skiego-w-biurze-rpo>.

66. More information at <http://www.nigdywiecej.org/brunatna-ksiega>, retrieved January 7, 2018.

67. More information at <http://hejtstop.pl/>, retrieved January 7, 2018.

68. <https://www.facebook.com/osrodek.monitorowania/>, retrieved January 7, 2018.

69. More information at <http://zero-tolerancji.pl/> retrieved January 7, 2018.

against Christians.⁷⁰ Similarly, in response to the attack on the Muslim Cultural Centre in Warsaw,⁷¹ the organisation United against Racism (Zjednoczeni Przeciw Rasizmowi) organized a demonstration in support of Muslims and against racism in Poland in front of the Central Metro Station in Warsaw.⁷² Some Christian circles also actively join the counter-Islamophobia initiatives. Branches of the Tygodnik Powszechny Club in Warsaw⁷³ and Poznań,⁷⁴ together with the Catholic Intelligence Club invited representatives of the Muslim League of Poland to talk about Islam, Muslims and refugees at their monthly gatherings; they also organised workshops on how to counter the propaganda in the media.⁷⁵

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The Polish government and the state institutions are reluctant to acknowledge and challenge Islamophobia, instead trying to cast Islamophobic acts as hooliganism, ignoring the rise of Islamophobic crime and often fuelling it. Anti-discrimination policies have not been strengthened and those in existence continue to be ignored. Anti-discrimination education programme requirements have been removed from Polish schools. Taking as an example the Independence Day march, which became a platform for Islamophobic messages and hate speech and was also plagued by hate crime in the form of physical and verbal attacks against those who protested it, the response to these punishable acts by the police was at best sluggish, and at worst, non-existent, as there were reports of the police protecting the perpetrators, rather than the targeted groups. Hate crime data continues to be collected by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji), as well as the National Prosecutor (Prokurator Krajowy), and analysed by the Main Statistics Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny). As Islamophobic hate crime is not a distinct category, it is difficult to track its rise through official statistics; instead, the records of third-sector organisations supply such data which is unfortunately necessarily fragmentary. However, it appears that both the prosecutors and the police often refuse to

70. *Codziennypoznan.pl*, "Cichy protest w obronie poznańskiego imama" *Codziennypoznan.pl*, (July 6, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://www.codziennypoznan.pl/artykul/2017-07-05/cichy-protest-w-obronie-poznanskiego-imama>.

71. Sulowski, Kacper, "Atak na Ośrodek Kultury Muzułmańskiej. Policja szuka sprawców" *Wyborcza.pl*, (November 27, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2018, from <http://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,22702415,atak-na-osrodek-kultury-muzulmanskiej-policja-szuka-sprawcow.html>.

72. Zjednoczeni Przeciw Rasizmowi, Facebook page, note published on November 29, 2017, retrieved January 7, 2018, from https://web.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=517956095236397&id=162698294095514.

73. Klub TP Warszawa, Facebook page, note published on September 18, 2017, retrieved January 7, 2018, from <https://web.facebook.com/KlubTPWarszawa/posts/861724640652253>.

74. Klub TP Poznań, Facebook page, note published on November 13, 2017, retrieved January 7, 2018, from <https://web.facebook.com/TPPoznan/posts/10156046616523900>.

75. Klub TP Warszawa, Facebook page, note published on October 16, 2017, retrieved January 7, 2018, from <https://web.facebook.com/KlubTPWarszawa/posts/875403409284376>.

record and act on reports of hate crimes. In this situation it is understandable that victims of such crime may be reluctant to contact these institutions. Instead, third-sector organisations such as Never Again (Nigdy Więcej) receive such reports in astounding numbers. Right-wing academics and commentators with an anti-Islamic bias are much more likely to be consulted and invited to state initiatives and state-controlled media programmes. Muslims are generally absent from these endeavours and, so, further silenced. Objective voices on the matter are relegated to the ever-shrinking neutral media.

The policy recommendations made by the last report⁷⁶ have unfortunately been ignored. In the face of this, we feel the necessity to restate them here.

- In order to challenge Islamophobia and other forms of xenophobia in Poland, at least minimally, the recognition at the highest level of the state that such issues exist is first and foremost necessary.
- It is also necessary to significantly strengthen widely understood anti-discrimination policies in the whole country. The resolved governmental Council for Fight Against Racism and Xenophobia should be reinstated or a new body should be created to address the issues of racism and xenophobia at the highest level and to overlook the policies undertaken to tackle these phenomena.
- There cannot be any tolerance of hate speech and all forms of hate crimes should be punished with outmost severity.
- A new mechanism of collecting data on hate crimes should be put in place and the employees of relevant state institutions (in particular the police) should be trained in how to register cases of such crimes.
- State institutions in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders (in particular from academia and the non-governmental sector) should identify some of the key issues of xenophobia and racism in the country and in cooperation with these stakeholders fight to build a more tolerant and inclusive society.

In addition, we suggest an additional recommendation related to the media:

- Media organisations that advocate hate crime, including Islamophobic crime, and engage in hate speech ought to have their public funding cut, if they receive any. This recommendation should be legislated as soon as possible.

76. Pędziwiatr, Konrad, *Islamophobia in Poland: National Report 2016*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul, SETA, 2017, retrieved January 8, 2018 from <http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/POLAND.pdf>, p. 438.

Chronology

- **03.01.2017:** A group of men attacked and severely injured a Pakistani Muslim man in Ozorków. The perpetrators were all imprisoned although they were only sentenced to less than 2 years.⁷⁷
- **08.04.2017:** Three men attacked and severely injured three Pakistani Muslim men who worked in a restaurant in Świdwin.⁷⁸
- **17.04.2017:** Four men attacked the Bangladeshi owner and staff of a kebab restaurant in Łódź. They verbally and physically abused the staff. The police patrol demonstrated indifference to the incident.⁷⁹
- **28.04.2017:** The Prosecutor Office discontinued the inquiry into a public incitement to racial and religious hatred by Justyna Helcyk, a member of the far-right organisation National Radical Camp.⁸⁰
- **16.06.2017:** The Regional Prosecutor's Office discontinued the investigation into the case of disturbing the Friday prayer rites at the Islamic Culture Centre in Katowice on December 30, 2016 by the ONR (National Racial Camp) rally, under the slogan 'Silesians against Islamic terrorism'.
- **19.06.2017:** A pseudo-scientific conference about Islam took place in the Polish Lower House of Parliament (Sejm). Not a single speaker was Muslim, and those who spoke displayed a significant anti-Muslim bias, depicting Islam as barbaric. The conference was organised by a Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) MP Tadeusz Dziuba and Natasza Dembińska-Urbaniak, the chairperson of the Conservative Women's Congress (Kongres Kobiet Konserwatywnych).
- **20.06.2017:** A Law and Justice MP, Jan Mosiński, published an Islamophobic slur about an opposition party politician on his Facebook page.
- **20.06.2017:** An open letter from the representatives of the Muslim community is sent to the speaker of the Polish Parliament. It asks for a response to the increased amount of hate speech in the Polish public space that may lead to physical attacks.
- **21.06.2017:** A Muslim student from Germany visiting Poland as part of a school trip to the concentration camp in Majdanek (near Lublin) was spat at by an aggressive male. A police patrol to whom the group reported the attack ignored the report, and another patrol's only reaction was laughter.
- **01.09.2017:** The commencement of the new academic year saw the erasure of anti-discrimination objectives in the education programme in Polish schools. It

77. *Brown Book* - hate crime monitoring carried out by the Never Again Association (selected incidents from 2017, forthcoming).

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

was replaced by the objective of ‘shaping patriotic and civic attitudes, and national and cultural identity’.

- **08.09.2017:** A Muslim woman was physically and verbally attacked by a man in Warsaw. He pushed and kicked her violently. She was helped by a passer-by and the perpetrator was detained by the police.
- **07.10.2017:** The event ‘Rosary at the borders’ was organised on the day of the anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto (in which the fleet of the Holy League defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Empire in 1571). Approximately one million Poles flocked to the country’s borders, apparently to pray for ‘world peace’ and the help of Virgin Mary in facing modern-day dangers. One of the organisers listed the ‘Islamisation of Europe’ as one of the current challenges.
- **18.10.2017:** A Muslim couple were verbally attacked by a man in a tram in Poznan. The attack was triggered by the fact that the couple were visibly Muslim and spoke German.
- **11.11.2017:** Far-right groups that took part in the Independence Day march in Warsaw carried banners with fascist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic slogans. The event was reported on widely in international media.
- **27.11.2017:** The premises of the Muslim Cultural Centre in Warsaw were vandalised. The act was recorded on CCTV, and three weeks later the perpetrator was detained by the police who found leaflets propagating hate speech in his flat.
- **19.12.2017:** In a cabinet reshuffle Beata Kempa, known for her anti-refugee attitude, was nominated as the Minister for Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees. In February, she has said, “Everyone who knows Islam well, realises that if we bring here sick [Muslim] children for their treatment, because they spent time with the non-believers, they will not be accepted back into their families.”⁸¹

81. Onet Wiadomości. “Beata Kempa: uchodźcom trzeba pomagać mądrze”, *Onet.pl* (February 27, 2017), retrieved January 11, 2018 from <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/beata-kempa-uchodzcom-trzeba-pomagac-madrze/rzxd3q>.