

Introduction to Social, Humanitarian, & Cultural Issues Committee

The Third Committee or the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues Committee was founded in 1946 as a part of the United Nations Organization along with other General Assembly committees. SOCHUM's mission is to address "agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world" and was in reaction to the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The committee just finished its seventy-fourth session. Thus, the priority focus of the committee is on examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council which was established in 2006. Additionally, the committee is concerned with the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.

It should also be noted that, as this is a General Assembly committee, all resolutions are **non-binding**. What this means is that operative clause language which is more indicative of a Security Council resolution (e.g. 'Demands') should not be used, with non-binding language (e.g. 'Urges', 'Recommends') being used instead. This also means that any peacekeeping operations or punitive measures (such as economic sanctions) cannot directly be authorised by this committee, although it is within the committee's power to *suggest* or *recommend* that the Security Council take these actions in a manner stipulated by the committee. It is still acceptable, however, to refer to resolutions passed previously by non-General Assembly committees (including the Security Council) in the perambulatory clauses of a resolution.

In terms of social development, the committee addresses issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

Introduction to topic

The concept of institutional racism re-emerged in political discourse in the late 1990s after a long hiatus. Despite it initially seeming pivotal to New Labor's reform of policing and the antecedent of a new race equality agenda, it has remained a contested concept that has been critiqued by multiple constituencies. It is of utmost importance to note the ambiguities and contradictions of the concept and considers its validity as an explanatory concept for long-observed ethnic inequalities in educational attainment and stop and search. In so doing, it argues for its retention, but only within a multilevel framework that incorporates racialization's operating at the micro, and macro levels.

The possibility that Islamophobia could also manifest itself as religious or cultural bigotry is generally overlooked. Argument is that although anti-Islam bigotry is intertwined with anti-Muslim racism, the two are conceptually distinct. Making this distinction allows us to better analyze, unmask, and critically assess Islamophobia. Researchers conceptually explore the similarities and differences between anti-Muslim racism and anti-Islam bigotry. It finds that although anti-Islam bigotry implies a prejudicial rejection of an essentialized idea of Islam, it understands religion or culture to be an individual choice and allows for the possibility that Muslims convert or assimilate. As such, it differs from anti-Muslim racism, which implies that the Muslim identity and the negative characteristics associated with Islam are innate and unchangeable. People argue that contemporary Islamophobic political discourse in Europe is predominantly racist, although it hides behind a cloak of anti-Islam bigotry.

History and Background

Xenophobia

Xenophobia, or fear of strangers, is a broad term that may be applied to any fear of someone who is different from us.

The twenty-first century promises to be a new age of migration. Intensifying international migration pressures present many societies with major policy dilemmas; most countries of the world are becoming more multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual. These changes challenge governments and civil society to accommodate and gain from this diversity in ways which promote peace and respect for human rights.

According to UNESCO xenophobia is defined as —attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity

One in every fifty human beings – more than 150 million persons – lives outside their countries of origin as migrants or refugees. They are highly vulnerable to racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The extent and severity of these phenomena are becoming increasingly evident in the reports of mistreatment and discrimination against migrants, refugees and other non-nationals, which are emerging from every region in the world. The fact that an increasing proportion of international migration today is irregular and unauthorized facilitates abuse and exploitation. But, even when their movements are legal and authorized, non-citizens face high levels of discrimination.

Islamophobia

This refer dislike of hate or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force.

Over the last couple of decades, namely after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, Islamophobia transformed beyond recognition. No longer a spontaneous expression of emotions, it turned into an ideology that found its way into the political agendas of right-wing extremist groups, seeking to make political gains by promoting hatred against Islam and Muslims. This systematic effort to distort the image of Islam and Muslims, is not limited to the extreme right, but also includes secular-minded thinkers and intellectuals, who consciously harbour hostile sentiments against religion, seeing in the increasing number of Muslims in Western societies, an existential threat to these societies and their secular way of life. A report published in the United States by the Council of American Islamic Relations in 2013, revealed the existence of a network of more than 37 groups, which engage in the systematic promotion of hatred against Islam and which played a role in introducing 78 legal amendments to Congress and other legislative bodies between 2011 and 2012, all of which aimed at distorting the image of Islam. Unfortunately, these systematic efforts to distort the image of Islam and Muslims, coupled with the rise in terrorist acts involving some Muslim individuals, turned Islamophobia into a permanent cultural phenomenon, constantly evolving and ultimately feeding into so-called anti-terrorism laws, running counter to the efforts made by Muslims to enact legislation criminalizing hate speech against them.

Institutionalised racism,

Institutional racism, also known as systemic racism, is a form of racism that is embedded through laws and regulations within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues.

The term *institutional racism* was first coined in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. Carmichael and Hamilton wrote in 1967 that while individual racism is often identifiable because of its overt nature, institutional racism is less perceptible because of its "less overt, far more subtle" nature. Institutional racism "originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than individual racism.

Institutional racism was defined by Sir William Macpherson in the UK's Lawrence report as: "The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people".

Current situation

For the accurate addressal of Islamophobia we shall look into its current situation and the significant events.

In recent times, one can look towards The People's Republic of China and see the blatant human rights violations being carried out against the Uighur Muslims under the banner of counter terrorism. The UNHRC hasn't been allowed to carry out investigations and multiple human rights charters by the UN have been violated by China. This religion-based violence including rape, forced conversions, physical assault, and forced contraception goes directly against fundamental human rights. More than one million Uighurs have been detained in supposed 're-education' camps where they have been excessively tortured by the guards. This denied state sponsored terrorism is indicative of all the mass regulation posed at Muslims globally, which even the Muslim states like Saudi Arabia do not mind to turn a blind eye to.

The state policy of France has also encapsulated within itself some regressive policies targeted towards Muslims. With the Muslim women unable to take the hijab or wear the burkini, their religious sentiments are side-lined and with passing of the French anti-radicalism bill this only gains more momentum. This alongside xenophobia proves to be a rising threat to Muslims all across the world and has resulted in an increase in criminal activities against them. The radicalized policy of Nationalism which remains popular in many areas globally, can be labelled as one of the biggest causes of xenophobia. The xenophobic violence directed towards African and Asian natives in South Africa mimics the times of apartheid. Human Rights Watch calls this 'routine' and 'lethal'. Even with the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, killings, serious injuries, forced displacement, discrimination, and barriers to justice and basic services have been recorded. The 'stealing jobs' mentality in regards to foreigners are widely popular with the Human Rights Watch interviewing 51 people – including 2 children, ages 10 and 11 – who live in Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal provinces and reviewing media reports and South African laws, regulations, and decisions; to document mass xenophobic harassment and attacks.

For nearly two decades the United States Federal Government (US Government), state governments, and local authorities, have infringed on the religious freedoms of its citizens and lawful residents by enacting policies and practices that disproportionately discriminate against Muslims. For example, the 2017 Presidential Proclamation 9645, known as the Travel Ban or otherwise referred to by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others as the Muslim Ban, is the newest addition to the list of preceding federal measures that attempt to legalize discrimination against Muslims. The US Government rather than striving to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and striving to promote inclusivity, is

fuelling xenophobia and Islamophobia through sweeping policy decisions and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Despite many communities responding to covid-19 with strong cooperation some have found in it a pretext to scapegoat foreign nationals, blaming them for the virus' spread. Racist and xenophobic incidents have been widespread. IOM is concerned that xenophobia will further increase, exacerbated by social tensions created by the projected economic downturn. Now more than ever, the safety of our society depends on the effective protection of the most vulnerable. Respect for the rights of all, including migrants, will maximize our success in curbing the pandemic and promoting an inclusive recovery.

Past UN Actions:

Throughout the years the UN has taken active measures to curb these prevalent issues through many ways that uphold the SOCHUM mandate.

As early as 1946, the Commission on Human Rights, which branched out from the Economic and Social Council, made discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language, religion, a standing item on its agenda, along with the drafting of the International Covenant on Civil Rights, as well as women's rights. The Commission established a sub-commission on Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, which has worked since the 1950s on developing procedures on the prohibition of national, racial or religious incitement.

In 1960, the sub-committee prepared a study on religious discrimination, including recommendations for General Principles for adoption as a Resolution by the General Assembly, or in the form of an international declaration.

In 1962, at the conclusion of a debate on religious discrimination and ethnic discrimination, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions. The first one provided for the preparation of a draft declaration and a draft agreement on combating all forms of racial discrimination, and the second calling for the preparation of a draft declaration and a draft convention against all forms of religious intolerance.

In 1965, the United Nations issued the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In 1979, the General Assembly announced that intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion was becoming a neglected discrimination, leading to a fresh tabling of the matter and the ultimate adoption by the General Assembly of

resolution 36/55, containing a declaration on the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

In 1999, the OIC submitted a resolution for combating “defamation of religions”, as a means of expressing its growing concern over the emergence of new forms of intolerance and hatred with regard to Islam and Muslims in various parts of the world. It was adopted by vote in 2010.

Resolution 16/18 and General Assembly resolution 66/167 are considered the two most important resolutions on the issue of intolerance and religious discrimination

In 2019, the UN passes the resolution titled “Combatting terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief”, in the General Assembly after the saddening Christchurch attack in New Zealand, highly condemning continuing violence and acts of terrorism targeting individuals on their religion and belief.

It further protected the right to freedom of worship and practicing religion and encouraged a culture of peace and tolerance. Kuwait, Malaysia, Canada, Israel and Turkey all stood up for this cause in the GA.

The resolution 7/19 condemns racial stereotyping, disrespect of religion and calls out fight against terrorism becoming anti-religion and economically disenfranchising religious groups exclusively. It further emphasizes the importance of freedom of religion and international human rights while calling out political institutions for popularizing anti-religion sentiments and calls upon the executive bodies for protection of beliefs. The resolution was rejected by Canada, France, Italy and the UK among others.

Last year, the resolution on ‘Promotion of Interreligious and intercultural dialogues’ led by Pakistan also passed with a dominant majority, which the GA adopted. This resolution is said to be a part of Pakistan’s global efforts to promote interfaith harmony, tolerance, respect for each other’s religions and values, and peaceful co-existence.

In the wake of growing religious intolerance and racism, especially Islamophobia around the world, the resolution focuses on interreligious and cultural dialogues amongst all stakeholders and advocates combatting intolerance, Xenophobia, discrimination and acts of violence.

Globalization has been encouraged more than ever with these reforms and persistent efforts are seen to be made to curb this.

Case Studies:

India:

Muslims in India have been increasingly at risk since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was first elected in 2014. Faizan died in a carnage amidst rising communal tensions in the country. On December 12, 2019, the Modi administration achieved passage of the discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). Under the act, for the first time in India, religion is a basis for granting citizenship. The law specifically fast-tracks asylum claims of non-Muslim irregular immigrants from the neighbouring Muslim-majority countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The amended citizenship law, coupled with the government's push for a nationwide citizenship verification process through a National Population Register (NPR) and a proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC), aimed at identifying "illegal migrants," has led to fears that millions of Indian Muslims, including many families who have lived in the country for generations, could be stripped of their citizenship rights and disenfranchised. In Assam alone 2 million Indians, mainly Muslims has been declared stateless.

Since the Modi administration first took office, BJP leaders have repeatedly made Hindu nationalist and anti-Muslim remarks in their speeches and interviews. These have, at times, encouraged and even incited violent attacks by party supporters who believe they have political protection and approval. They have beaten Muslim men for dating Hindu women. Mobs affiliated to the BJP have, since 2015, killed and injured scores of members of religious minorities amid rumours that they traded or killed cows for beef. In February 2019, BJP supporters threatened and beat several Kashmiri Muslim students and traders, apparently to avenge a militant attack on a security forces convoy.

In 2019, PM Modi rescinded the semi-autonomous status of Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir and declared martial law. Indian forces invaded, arresting tens of thousands of political dissidents who support independence from India. Thus, commencing a reign of terror which continues to this day.

In the world's largest democracy, anti-Muslim hate has steadily become mainstream, both online and offline. Just a year ago, politicians from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party as well as dozens of news channels accused a gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat, an international Islamic missionary group, of deliberately spreading the coronavirus in India after more than 4,000 cases were

[linked](#) to it. At the time, #CoronaJihad was one of the top trending topics on Twitter in the region.

Israel, New Zealand and Europe:

In Israel, right-wing parties have ruled almost without interruption from 1977. They employed creeping Palestinian land and resource appropriation leading to *de facto* annexation of the West Bank. In this apartheid system, Jewish settlers are full citizens and Palestinians, *persona non grata*.

This link between Israel and the far-right movements around the world, however, is not one based solely on their shared hatred for Islam and Muslims or common goals of Zionism and white supremacy. There is increasing evidence that Israel and far-right groups around the world are converging in a global movement that aims to promote and grow far-right ideology and politics.

At the core of this emerging union is the conspiracy theory of the “great replacement” which was laid out by the infamous far-right ideologue Renaud Camus in his book “Le Grand Remplacement”. Camus offers an extreme interpretation of Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilisations”, arguing that Europe faces a Muslim invasion which will lead to “change of civilisation”.

European far-right ideologues and groups who espouse the “great replacement” conspiracy theory are also all eager supporters of Israel.

Camus, himself, has expressed his admiration for Israel on a number of occasions. In December 2017, after Donald Trump moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, he [tweeted](#): “Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Israel is a model of resistance. We must make Europe a greater Israel”.

During a 2015 speech, Dutch MP Geert Wilders, who is well known for his Islamophobia, [said](#): “There is nothing wrong with preserving our own Judeo-Christian civilization. That is our duty Look at Israel, learn from Israel; Israel is an island in a sea of Islamic barbarism. Israel is a beacon of freedom and prosperity in a region of Islamic darkness. Israel refuses to be overrun by jihadists. So should we.”

Former leader of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson has [claimed](#) that “Jewish people are persecuted [by Muslims] and no one speaks out for them.”

Both Wilders and Robinson have [received money](#) from the pro-Israel think-tank, the Middle East Forum, to offset their legal costs after they were charged with incitement of hate against Muslims.

Austrian Vice-Chancellor and leader of the far-right Freedom Party Heinz-Christian Strache, who has called for “zero immigration” and putting “an end to the policy of Islamisation” in Austria, has visited Israel a number of times in recent years and supported moving the Austrian embassy to Jerusalem.

Italy's interior minister, Matteo Salvini, who has been [linked](#) to the German Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA), chose to launch his electoral campaign for the Italian elections during a 2016 [visit](#) to Israel, where he declared: “Israel embodies the perfect balance of different realities, while ensuring law and order. It surely is a role model for security and anti-terrorism policies.” Two years later, Salvini won enough votes to form a coalition government with the populist Five Star movement.

Salvini's electoral success, along with Strache's in Austria and Viktor Orban's in Hungary, have brought far-right ideas into European governance. In countries across Europe, South and South-east Asia and the Americas, where the far right has failed to make it to the government, it has still managed to push national politics to the right.

This global far-right movement has also emboldened the grassroots and encouraged more violence, where rabid Islamophobia has also been combined with admiration for Israel.

Alexandre Bissonnette, who killed six worshipers in a Quebec mosque in 2017, was a fan of the Israeli army and pro-Israel groups such as “United with Israel”.

Brenton Tarrant, who killed 50 Muslims in Christchurch and who refers to Camus' conspiracy theory in his manifesto, visited Israel, along with other countries, where he was searching for the proverbial clash of civilisations and struggle against the “Muslim invaders”. He was recently found to have donated money to the far-right anti-Muslim group [Identitarian Movement Austria](#).

Considering the degree of violence now associated with these far-right groups and parties, it is essential that we move with our understanding from merely

analysing [possible links](#) to strongly confronting all channels of political support and validation they receive, including from Israel.

Israel's success in making its war on Palestinians a global cause, shared among far-right ideologues worldwide is not just a danger to world peace, but a precursor for more deadly violence, from Gaza to Quebec to Christchurch.

China:

Human rights groups believe China has detained more than one million Uyghurs against their will over the past few years in a large network of what the state calls "re-education camps", and sentenced hundreds of thousands to prison terms.

There is also evidence that Uyghurs are being used as forced labour and of women being forcibly sterilised. Some former camp detainees have also alleged they were tortured and sexually abused.

The leading human rights groups Amnesty and Human Rights Watch have published reports accusing China of crimes against humanity.

China denies all allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, claiming its system of "re-education" camps are there to combat separatism and Islamist militancy in the region.

Several countries, including the US, Canada and the Netherlands, have accused China of committing genocide - defined by [international convention](#) as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". The declarations follow reports that, as well as interning Uyghurs in camps, [China has been forcibly mass sterilising Uyghur women to suppress the population](#), separating children from their families, and attempting to break the cultural traditions of the group.

The US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, has said [China is committing "genocide and crimes against humanity"](#). The UK Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, has said the treatment of Uyghurs amounts to "appalling violations of the most basic human rights", and the UK parliament declared in April 2021 that China was committing a genocide in Xinjiang.

A UN human rights committee in 2018 said it had credible reports that China was holding up to a million people in "counter-extremism centres" in Xinjiang.

The [Australian Strategic Policy Institute](#) found evidence in 2020 of more than 380 of these "re-education camps" in Xinjiang, an increase of 40% on previous estimates.

Earlier, leaked documents known as the China Cables made clear that the camps were intended to be run as high security prisons, with strict discipline and

punishments. People who have managed to escape the camps have reported physical, mental and sexual torture. Women have spoken of mass rape and sexual abuse.

France:

French law on protecting the values of the republic has sparked outrage on claims that it has legalized Islamophobia, French president have done a great deal in showing one side of story to French people and another to international media.

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International have expressed concerns over the law which targets Muslims in France and can alienate them by restricting their rights and interfering with their beliefs.

The law, which was approved by parliament on Feb. 16, has been accepted by the Senate with addition of even harsh measures on the name of anti-separatism and fight against radical Islam, the French government banned home-schooling for Muslims, made formal education obligatory and is able to close associations, schools and mosques if a suspicious incident occurred.

A number of parliament members abstained from a vote as they found the draft law "insufficient," expecting it to involve harsher interventions such as a ban on wearing headscarves across the country.

The increase in the number of Muslims is regarded as a threat and a source of worry by far-right politicians, if a Muslim person's visibility increases in social, cultural and political life, their chances of being regarded as a terrorist increases in France.

The French society is home to the largest Muslim community in Europe and is subjected to institutionalized racism at so many levels, critics claim that the law is a stunt by the ruling party to gather support for 2022 general elections in France. French president Emmanuel Macron has faced backlash from the far left within France and the international community particularly from Turkish president.

Conclusion:

This institutionalised racism is transforming in a menace for the societies worldwide and have fueled communal violence hatred and discrimination of identities, particularly Muslims. The xenophobia against muslims have led to

millions being stripped of their citizenship, denied security and basic human rights recognised under ECHR and the universal charter of UNO. This grave issue requires the attention of the international community before dynamics get worse in countries like India and China, each country needs to play their own role to mourn the past, stop the current and to avoid the future genocides against Muslims.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. Explain the root causes of Islamophobic and xenophobic discrimination.
2. Explain the role of media in perpetuating this discrimination.
3. The role of 9/11 in encouraging institutionalised Islamophobia.
4. How can UN and international bodies curb the increasing rate of institutionalised islamophobia and xenophobia?
5. Discuss the systematic discrimination in the workplace and its economic effects.
6. What and how actions can be taken against governments which promote institutionalised racism, Islamophobia and Xenophobia?

More sources to use:

<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/israel-india-and-the-islamophobic-alliance-46>

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/pranavdixit/anti-muslim-bias-india-israel-palestine>

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/04/09/shoot-traitors/discrimination-against-muslims-under-indias-new-citizenship-policy>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-stream/2021/4/15/is-france-legalising-islamophobia>

