



ISLAMOPHOBIA

Topic Brief

Islamophobia is a fear of Islam, exhibited in terms of behavior and as an attitude. It can further be described as negative behavior towards Islam and Muslims, which includes prejudice, intolerance, hostility, discrimination, exclusion, rejection, inimicality, violence, and hate. Public opinion polls, conducted done by the Pew Research Center, show in various countries have discovered that a preponderant proportion of the population bare negative opinions of Islam and Muslims in various counties, after the term Islamophobia gained salience in the 80s and 90s. The European survey data revealed that negative feelings toward Muslims are more prevalent, juxtaposed to prejudice towards immigrants in general. The European monitoring center on racism and xenophobia registers discrimination and violence towards Muslims and negative reports about Muslims in the mass media. The center also noticed that Muslims are more confronted with violence, discrimination and exclusion than other groups, and thus, a vast majority of Muslims suffer discrimination in education, in housing and in the labour market.

Discussion Questions and Activities

- What are some ways to counter discrimination in your community?
- What happens when stereotypes go unchecked?
- Research Islamophobia in the news and hashtags concerning Islamophobia, for example #IStandWithAhmed.



Our Current World: Persecution of Uighurs

Uighurs are critical victims of Islamophobia, residing in the Xinjiang region of western China. Large compounds, surrounded by high walls and guards, have been built in Xinjiang and serve as detainment facilities to several thousands to a million Uighur people. These places are also referred to by the Chinese government as Vocational Centers but function as political and cultural indoctrination centers. They are also reports of people being tortured, humiliated, monitored sometimes denied food or sleep as a strategy for enforcing absolute obedience to the government and control. And prisoners are made to denounce religion, culture while pledging allegiance to the communist party of the Chinese state. Majority of Uighurs living in the United States reside in the Washington Metropolitan area and many of them have reported threats by the Chinese authorities and are afraid to speak up for fear of the consequences that might be meted out on their relatives who are being held hostage by the Chinese government.