FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAMAPHOBIA AND MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

What is Islam?
Islam is a monotheistic religion that is based on the book of the Koran. Islam faithful believe in Allah (God) and in the prophet Muhammad as his messenger. The Qur'an, in fact, was dictated by Allah to Muhammad through Yibril (the archangel Gabriel), according to the Islamic tradition. Islam is an Arabic word that means peace, purity, acceptance and commitment. As a religion, Islam completely takes acceptance and submission to the teaching and counsel of God.

What is Islamophobia?
The term Islamophobia denotes fear, hatred or prejudice against Islam and Muslims. Like all phobias, Islamophobia is an irrational fear and, therefore, goes beyond reason and does not respond to a real threat to the individual. Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism are often mixed, implying the racialization of a religious category: discrimination of a Muslim person whatever his physical appearance, origin or language.

What is the meaning of the word Muslim?
It is an Arabic word meaning "he who submits (to God)". Muslim is the person whose religious creed is Islam. The Arabic word muslim, feminine muslīma, means "the submitted or surrendered to the will of God". Thus, anyone who has accepted submission to God can be called a Muslim without fear of being mistaken.

Is discrimination against Muslims legal?
Intolerance and discrimination against Muslims is not a legal concept per se. However, certain manifestations of intolerance or discrimination against Muslims may be illegal under the criminal, civil or administrative law of a State.

How does discrimination against Muslims affect our communities?
The effects can be harmful to society, not only in terms of their negative effects on people, but also because of the threat they might pose to the tranquility, stability and security of society.

Why are schools key to preventing discrimination against Muslims in schools?
Since intolerance and discrimination against Muslims are often rooted in prejudices, stereotypes and insufficient knowledge of Islam and Muslim culture, education can play a key role as a driver of a change of attitude and understanding and mutual respect.

How does discrimination impact Muslim communities?
Some manifestations of discrimination may constitute criminal acts, which is necessary to inform the authorities about. Such acts may consist of threats, destruction or profanation of property, or vandalism; and violent attacks or assaults on people from Muslim or perceived Muslim communities, exclusion, verbal assaults, derogatory remarks, insults, jokes about identity or beliefs, spreading of lies and false
rumors, physical intimidation consisting of hitting, kicking or pushing, or spitting, which can become criminal.

**FREQUENT STEREOTYPES ABOUT MUSLIMS IN THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE**

- All are equal: Muslims are treated as if they were all alike, regardless of nationalities, social classes or political inclinations, regardless of whether or not they are believers or practitioners.

- All their acts are motivated by religion: it is thought that what is most important to Muslims, whatever the circumstance, is their religious faith. Thus, if, for example, a Muslim commits violent acts, he is thought to have done so because his religion advocates violence.

- They are "another world": Muslims are seen as belonging to "another world", with very few interests, needs or values in common with those who do not belong to the Muslim community. Therefore, it is thought that Muslims cannot have ideas or teachings to bring to people of other religions or cultural fields.

- They are culturally and morally inferior: Muslims are perceived as culturally and morally inferior and prone to irrational and violent behavior, intolerant towards women, disdainful of any worldview other than theirs, and hostile and resentful toward "the West "without reasons.

- They are a threat: Muslims are thought to be a security threat. They are waging a world-wide "war of civilizations", and in countries where they are a minority they are seen as the "internal enemy", tacitly or openly sympathetic to international terrorism and favorable to the "Islamization" of the countries in which they live.

- Cooperation is impossible: As a consequence of these five preconceived ideas, it is argued that active collaboration between Muslims and people from different religious or cultural backgrounds, on an equal footing and open to dialogue and patient negotiation, is not possible.

**Sources:**

Guidelines for educators on how to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophobia through education. Published by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.


Combat Islamophobia from Education


Monographs


Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musulm%C3%A1n](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musulm%C3%A1n)
INSTRUCTIONS TO VISIT A MOSQUE:

Like all communities of faith, the prayer houses of the Islamic community also have certain steps to celebrate the solemnity and meaning of their prayer days which is a space to reaffirm their faith. If you have never attended a prayer service in a mosque, the following instructions will help you prepare before your visit. We also recommend that you listen carefully and follow the instructions given to you when you arrive at the mosque.

1. Suitable clothing for the mosque.
   
   - Both men and women should wear loose clothing, i.e. not tight to the body.
   - Loose pants and dress shirts are preferable. Buttoned up.
   - Cover the upper: shoulders, neck and head, including the wrists.
   - If you want to wear a skirt, the length should go to the feet so that your ankles are covered.
   - Many mosques require non-Muslim women to cover their heads as well.

2. Do not wear shoes inside the prayer area. Shoes are not to be worn anywhere in a mosque other than the wardrobe. You will find the shelves available outside the prayer area where you should place your shoes as you enter.

3. There are areas assigned to pray in groups according to gender. Women sit in one group and men in another group. Ask for the assigned area for each group.

4. Sit cross-legged on the floor. Like Orthodox Christian churches, mosques do not have chairs or benches. Therefore, pray while sitting on the floor. It is considered disrespectful to sit with your legs stretched out.