



3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMBATING ISLAMOPHOBIA

Baku, 27 May 2025

Commemorating the Third Anniversary of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre and the Center of Analysis of International Relations in partnership with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the ICESCO, Muslim Council of Elders, the G20 Interfaith Forum, the Baku Initiative Group, Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, Central Council of Muslims in Germany, EULEMA - European Muslim Leaders Majlis, and Muslim International Forum held a conference entitled "Islamophobia in Focus: Unveiling Bias, Shattering Stigmas" on May 26-27, 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The conferences included the address by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Miguel Angel Moratinos, the UN Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of Political Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H. E. Prof. Ibrahim Saleh Al-Naimi, Chairman of Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Qatar, H.E. Prof. Cole Durham, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Khalid Al Ghaith, Secretary General of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity and other dignitaries.

Among the participants in the two-day debate were many officials, spiritual leaders, experts, academicians and media representatives – a total of 124 delegates from 38 countries.

This year the conference took place against the backdrop of ongoing regional challenges and a rapidly evolving global political and economic landscape. Discussions highlighted how manifestations of Islamophobia have taken on complex dimensions – socially and geopolitically – across various regions including the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and North America, underscoring the urgent need for collective action.

In this regard, the conference participants, recalling the resolution A/RES/76/254 (2022) adopted by the UN General Assembly proclaiming 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, emphasized that Islamophobia had emerged and developed as a new form of racism that includes, among others, discrimination, stigmatization and exclusion in all areas of life.

The participants of the conference discussed matters of intersectional approach in the fight against Islamophobia and coordinated efforts to promote tolerance, peace and respect for human rights and religious diversity, legal and economic problems, anti-Muslim rhetoric and legislation in Europe and Asia, the impact of Artificial Intelligence on media and digital space, advocacy strategies, gender and youth perspectives, the fate of Islamic heritage under threat and other relevant issues.



The participants observed that shifting geopolitical dynamics and ideological realignments have contributed to a rise in institutionalized Islamophobia, particularly in Europe and South Asia. As global tensions escalate, these trends have deepened societal divisions and heightened mistrust between nations and communities. With 2025 marking a critical juncture, participants called for urgent international cooperation to address both state-led and societal discrimination, including hate crimes and threats to Muslim heritage, as essential steps toward promoting cohesion and shared security.

The participants explored the intricate relationship between Islamophobia and Orientalism, tracing its roots to European colonial practices. Across Europe, the rise of far-right political forces has led to measures that restrict Islamic expression, often framed under the pretense of promoting "assimilation" or "integration." National discourses are increasingly influenced by populist rhetoric that stigmatizes Muslims and equates their religious identity with extremism.

In South Asia, a surge in inflammatory rhetoric and hate crimes signals a disturbing trend of state-sanctioned anti-Muslim nationalism, justified through narratives of cultural uniformity.

Thus, Islamophobia poses a serious threat to global stability and cohesion, undermining the international security and cooperation. As states increasingly adopt exclusionary and protectionist policies as well as rhetoric targeting Muslim communities, it erodes trust in global institutions and deepens divisions between nations and populations. In multilateral forums, it hampers constructive dialogue and cooperation, as countries facing stigmatization and discrimination are less likely to promote the unified approach and uphold international law.

Furthermore, Islamophobia has geopolitical implications that strain international relations, particularly between Muslim-majority and Western states. Perceived double standards in addressing religious discrimination—such as the silence or inaction of global powers in the face of violence against Muslims—contribute to a sense of injustice and alienation. This fosters resentment, impedes peacebuilding efforts, and can fuel radicalization. In an interconnected world, the marginalization of any group weakens global solidarity and increases the risk of conflict. Addressing Islamophobia is not merely a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for preserving a just and peaceful world order.

The conference participants supported the new approach by adopting the term "Anti-Muslims Discrimination" as a legal concept that accurately reflects the correct interpretation of the phenomenon of clear hostility against Muslims and their sanctities in a number of countries across Europe, North America, and South Asia.

In this context, the conference participants expressed their appreciation to the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) for its pioneering initiative in proposing the adoption of this new term.

The conference included the exhibition featuring the fate of destroyed Azerbaijani monuments during the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia, including mosques, cemeteries and other sites of common Islamic heritage.

The conference participants expressed appreciation to the host country for continued efforts to combat Islamophobia, and noted the institutionalization of the conference –



creation of the website, Board of Trustees and other elements, which contribute to the formation of the important political and academic platform.

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The Baku International Multiculturalism Center
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