ISLAMOPHOBIA IN DENMARK NATIONAL REPORT 2019

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Executive Summary

In the 2019 general elections, the centre-left parties won a majority mandate. This brought minorities and anti-racism campaigners some hope that the ethnonationalist political discourse would be reduced. However, Muslim citizens continued to face political stigmatisation and anti-Muslim racism in 2019. The Social Democrats campaigned with a promise to continue the harsh immigration policies and work against "parallel communities" (an implicit reference to Muslim citizens). They have continued to implement the internationally criticised 'ghetto'-policies which particularly target and discriminate so-called non-Western citizens. Furthermore, the government has introduced legislation that allows the Minister of Immigration and Integration to deprive dual citizens their Danish citizenship to prevent Danish foreign fighters who have travelled to Syria from re-entering Denmark. This poses a challenge for the division of power within Danish governance, as dual citizens can now be deprived of their citizenship without judicial oversight.

The 2018 niqab ban has been particularly worrisome for Muslim women. The police and state attorney have yet to prosecute any hate crime that women wearing a niqab have reported. This seems to have set a precedence that these women have little recourse for legal action. Nevertheless, the national police have campaigned among the Muslim community to encourage reporting experiences of hate crime in 2018-19, which is an important step to raise awareness of hate crime against Muslims.

Far-right politician Rasmus Paludan and his party, Hard Line, were approved to run for the 2019 elections and campaigned throughout Denmark on an anti-Muslim platform under heavy police protection. However, they did not win any seats in parliament. On a hopeful note, anti-Islamophobia and anti-racist NGOs seem to have become better at creating coalitions and collaborating on common issues in 2019. These NGOs are creating a basis for grassroots mobilisation against racism and Islamophobia, and collaborating with international civil rights organisations.

Sammenfatning

Folketingsvalget i 2019 resulterede i en sejr for de venstreorienterede partier, og således et håb om en formindskelse af den etnonationalistiske politiske diskurs. Det har dog vist sig, at muslimske borgere fortsat oplevede politisk stigmatisering og anti-muslimsk racisme i 2019 selv efter folkestingsvalget. Socialdemokratiets valgkampagne fokuserede på at fortsætte den hårde indvandringspolitik og arbejde imod hvad de betegner som "parallelsamfund" (en implicit henvisning til muslimske borgere). De har fortsat implementeringen af den internationalt kritiseret 'ghetto'-lovpakke som især diskriminerer såkaldt "ikke-vestlige indvandrere og efterkommere". Derudover har regeringen indført lovgivning, der giver Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeren magt til at fratage dobbeltsstatsborgere deres danske statsborgerskab – en lov indført for at forhindre, at danske "fremmedkrigere" vender hjem. Denne lovgivning er blevet kritiseret for at være en trussel mod Danmarks tredeling af magt, idet dobbeltstatsborgere kan få frataget deres statsborgerskab uden retsligt tilsyn.

Forbuddet mod *niqab* i 2018 har især været bekymrende for *niqab*-bærende kvinders sikkerhed. På trods af, at flere af disse kvinder har oplevet hadforbrydelser, når de færdes offentligt, har hverken politiet eller statsadvokaten retsforfulgt nogen for disse hadforbrydelser. Dette er en bekymrende tendens, da det påviser en manglende villighed til at tage disse kvinders anklager alvorligt. Ikke desto mindre har det nationale politi øget engagementet blandt det muslimske trossamfund for at understrege vigtigheden af at rapportere hadforbrydelser i 2018-19. Dette er et vigtigt skridt for at skabe opmærksomhed omkring hadkriminalitet mod muslimer.

Rasmus Paludan og hans parti, Stram Kurs, blev godkendt til at stille op til valget i 2019 og førte valgkampagne på et anti-muslimsk grundlag under høj politibeskyttelse. De vandt dog ingen pladser i folketinget. Året 2019 har dog vist en positiv fremgang blandt NGO'ers samarbejde i at bekæmpe islamofobi og racisme. Dette har skabt et godt grundlag for græsrodsmobilisering, samt et bedre samarbejde med internationale organisationer der arbejder for borgerrettigheder.

Country Profile EIR 2019

Country: Denmark

Type of Regime: Constitutional Monarchy **Form of Government:** Unitary parliamentarism

Ruling Parties: The Social Democrats (supporting parties: Danish Social Liberal Party, Red-

Green Alliance, Socialist People's Party)

Opposition Parties: *Venstre* - Denmark's Liberal Party, Danish People's Party, Liberal Alliance, Conservative People's Party, the New Right, the Alternative (the only leftist party in the opposition)

Last Elections: 2019 General Elections: the Social Democrats won 25.9% of the vote against 23.4% of *Venstre*. The Social Democrats with Mette Frederiksen as prime minister formed a single-party minority government in summer 2019.

Total Population: 5.8 million **Major Languages:** Danish

Official Religion: Protestant-Lutheran Christianity (the orientation of the Church of Denmark)

Statistics on Islamophobia: According to the latest available Danish National Police (*Rigspolitiet*) hate crime report, there was a total of 112 religiously motivated hate crimes in Denmark, 63 cases were against Muslims or Muslim institutions in 2018. This means that a majority of religiously motivated hate crime target Muslim (56%).

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: According to the latest available Danish National Police hate crime report there were 260 cases of racist incidents reported.

Major Religions (% of Population): Protestant Christians (74.7%), Islam (est. 5.5 %), Catholics (0.6 %).

Muslim Population (% of Population): 320,000 people (5.5%) in 2019. This estimate is an increase of 12,000 from 2018. The reason for this is that Statistics Denmark gained access through CPR (citizen identification data) of the ethnicity of third generation descendants of non-Western immigrants in 2019. Thus, those who originate from Muslim-majority countries can be included in the statistical calculations.

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Dansk-Tyrkisk Islamisk Stiftelse, Det Islamiske Trossamfund (DIT), Dansk Islamisk Center (DIC), Muslimsk Ungdom i Danmark (MUNIDA), Minhaj-ul-Quran Denmark, Dansk Muslimsk Ungdom, Dansk Muslimsk Union (DMU), Dansk Islamisk Råd

Main NGOs combating Islamophobia: Centre for Danish Muslim Relations, Sameksistens.dk, SOS Racisme, Kvinder I Dialog (Women in Dialogue), European Network Against Racism-Denmark, Center for Forbyggelse af Ekslusion (Centre for Prevention of Exclusion)

Far-Right Parties: Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*), The New Right (*Nye Borgerlige*), Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*)

Far-Right Movements: *Generation Identitær, For Frihed* (For Freedom, former PEGIDA), Nordfront

Far-Right Terrorist Organisations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices:

- **Hijab Ban**: None. The parliament rejected a bill-proposal to ban public servants from wearing religious symbols in March 2019.
- Halal Slaughter Ban: None
- Minaret Ban: None
- Circumcision Ban: None
- **Burka Ban**: Yes, implemented in 2018 following a parliamentary vote with a majority ruling in favour of a ban.
- **Prayer Ban**: None. The parliament rejected a proposal to prohibit prayer rooms in public educational institutions in 2018.

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Introduction

Denmark does not shy away from directly targeting Muslims in legislation. At the same time, because it is illegal to register a citizen's religion, it struggles to recognise the everyday and structural Islamophobia that its Muslim citizens experience. Racism is neglected in the Danish context.¹ By extension, Islamophobia as a form of racism is often socially dismissed, on the presumption that Muslims are not a 'race' and thus cannot be discriminated against based on their religious beliefs. Also, it is often claimed that the concept of Islamophobia curbs criticism of Islam and thus threatens freedom of speech.² This is an important backdrop to understand Islamophobia in Denmark in 2019.

A survey of over 5,900 Danes was conducted in 2019 by Professor Jørgen Goul Andersen in collaboration with the news site Mandag Morgen.³ The survey focused on Danes' sentiments towards immigration, and concluded that about 28% agreed/ partly agreed that Muslim immigrants should be deported. If this number is an indicator of the general sentiments of the Danish population, it means that almost a quarter of all Danes have significantly prejudicial views towards Muslims that may lead them to support restricting Muslims' civil rights. This is a worrying conclusion as it threatens the constitutional principle of religious freedom in Denmark. Although public discourse has become emboldened through the last several years in targeting Muslim citizens, the rhetoric is often masked behind a conflation of non-Western immigrants and descendants. Muslims represent the idea of 'non-Western' in policy, political rhetoric, and the public's imagination. This is significant in Denmark where race and racism are presumed to be non-existent, yet prevail through colour-blind rhetoric. In other words, 'non-Western' serves a colour-blind veneer to avoid emphasising a person's racial or religious belonging. The implication of this is that the Danish government can implement discriminatory legislation targeting 'non-Western immigrants and descendants' that in effect is aimed at Muslim citizens. In turn, this makes the case of Islamophobia in Denmark difficult to document, let alone address and contest.

This report is not a comprehensive overview of Islamophobic occurrences in 2019; rather, it focuses on major events within each subheading to demonstrate how prejudicial rhetoric of previous years is exacerbated with expanding legislation, surveillance, and negative campaigns towards Muslim citizens.

^{1.} R. Andreassen and K. Vitus, "Introduction: Affectivity as a Lens to Racial Formations in the Nordic Countries", *Affectivity and Race*, eds. R. Andreassen and K. Vitus, (Routledge, New York: 2016), p. 11–28.

^{2.} F. Elahi and O. Khan, "Introduction", *Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All*, eds. F. Elahi and O. Khan, (Runnymede Trust, London: 2017), p. 5-12.

^{3.} Jens Reierman and Torben K. Andersen, "Hver fjerde dansker: Muslimer ud af Danmark", Mandag Morgen, 21 October 2019, https://www.mm.dk/artikel/hver-fjerde-dansker-muslimer-skal-ud-af-danmark?utm_content=bufferc1d11&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

The number of physical and verbal attacks on Muslims in 2019 has yet to be published by the Danish National Police. There are however several public cases pertaining particularly to Muslim women wearing the niqab (face veil) or hijab that are worth mentioning. In April 2019, a 17-year-old girl wearing a hijab was violently attacked by a Danish man.⁴ The man yelled racist slurs at her, ripped off her hijab, kicked her in the head and punched her repeatedly. The attack took place in broad daylight and one man came to protect the young woman from her attacker.⁵

In late 2018 (a few months after the niqab ban took effect), a woman wearing a niqab in a grocery store was verbally assaulted by several male shoppers.⁶ In January 2019, the woman took the case to the state attorney who, after reviewing her case, argued she was not 'threatened' by the assaulters (according to §266 in Danish criminal law) and she could therefore not press charges. Yet, the woman's attorney explained to the online platform *Hadforbrydelser* that the woman was reporting the assault as a hate crime, which the state attorney neglected to address. The woman's attorney further highlighted that this case sets the precedence for vigilantism against women who wear the niqab.⁷ In line with this prediction, a niqab-wearing woman shared her experience of being assaulted in late 2019 on social media.⁸ In her post, she explains how a man approached her and her friend as she was leaving a shop and started yelling at her that it was illegal to wear the niqab after which he pulled it off. According to a message she shared on the support page on Facebook for women who wear the niqab in Denmark, she questioned whether she should report the assault to the police as she may be fined for wearing the niqab in the first place.

The Danish National Police have noted a significant rise in hate crimes against the Muslim population in Denmark in 2018, and have therefore started campaigning and raising awareness about hate crimes and the importance of reporting them to the police. As part of the campaign, the police visited a mosque to raise aware-

^{4. &}quot;Vidner søges i sag om overfald på 17 årig pige i Albertslund", Copenhagen West Police Force, 4 April 2019, https://politi.dk/koebenhavns-vestegns-politi/efterlyste-og-savnede-personer/vidner-soeges-i-sag-om-overfald-paa-17aarig-pige-i-albertslund/2019/04/04, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{5.} Caroline Haslund Siegumfeldt, "17-årig udsat for groft overfald - fik revet tørklædet af", TV2 Nyheder, 4 April 2019, https://nyheder.tv2.dk/krimi/2019-04-04-17-aarig-udsat-for-groft-overfald-fik-revet-toerklæde-af, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{6.} Sibel Özcan and Zeynep Bangert, "Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2018", European Islamophobia Report 2018, ed. Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez, (SETA, Istanbul: 2018), p. 251-282.

^{7.} Ronni Abergel, "Statsadvokat afviser racisme sag fra Kvickly", Hardforbrydelser.dk, 23 July 2019 http://hadforbrydelser.dk/statsadvokat-afviser-racisme-sag-fra-kvickly/ (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{8.} Kvinder i Dialog, Facebook, 1 December 2019 https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=kvinder%20i%20dialog&epa=SEARCH_BOX (Access date: 30 January 2020).

ness, answer questions and encourage the congregation to report any experiences of hate crime to the police. They continued this awareness campaign in 2019 and it will be important to see if there has been a change in the amount of reporting of Islamophobic hate crimes in 2019, when the Danish National Police publish their report later this year.

Employment

In 2019, news media revealed that Danish jobcentres - institutions that are in charge of assisting unemployed citizens find employment - have been categorising unemployed ethnic minorities as 'non-Western immigrant/descendant'. There is an implicit - and sometimes explicit -racialisation of Muslims as non-Western in Danish public consciousness. Since it is illegal to register religious affiliations in Denmark, the structural discrimination that occurs when citizens are categorised by the public system as 'non-Western' can be experienced as Islamophobic. This means that descendants of immigrants from the Global South whose families may have resided in Denmark for several generations are still categorised within policies and the public system as non-Western citizens.

In the case of jobcentres, unemployed ethnic minorities discovered that their online profile included the categorisation of non-Western immigrant/descendant with
no easy recourse to delete the designation. Furthermore, they did not volunteer this
information; rather, it was provided through the personal records the government
has on all Danish citizens through their CPR (citizen identification data), which
includes age, employment records, and ethnicity.¹⁰ The Center for Danish-Muslim
Relations (CEDAR) as well as local Copenhagen politician Badar Shah, a member of
the political party Alternative, requested access to official information regarding this
issue from the Employment and Integration authorities in Copenhagen. They were
informed that ethnic profiling was a state directive which could influence what offers
are given to particular citizens based on their ethnic heritage.¹¹ CEDAR sent further
information requests to the National Board of Labour and Employment questioning
the differentiation between ethnic Danes and ethnic minorities within jobcentre registers. They received a clarification that they use statistical information that evaluates
which factors can predict who becomes long-term unemployed, and Danish citizens

^{9.} Tania Andersen, "Jurist: Dataprofilering af langtidsledige med etnicitet er ulovlig", Version 2, 17 October 2019, https://www.version2.dk/artikel/jurist-dataprofilering-langtidsledige-med-etnicitet-ulovlig-1089176?f-bclid=IwAR26QicbA0F-Xe8VPCPwoWGacUMarIUl0e8dBqgMHJFDETieQsrMljM_eqQ, (Access date: 3 February 2020).

^{10. &}quot;Profilafklaring – det digitale forberedelsesskema på Jobnet", The National Board of Labour and Employment, 6 November 2019, https://star.dk/it/borger-it/profilafklaring-forberedelsesskema/ (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{11. &}quot;Badar Shah's Correspondance with the Employment and Integration Authorities", Direktion Beskæftigelses- og Integrationsforvaltningen, 9 October 2019, https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/uploaded-files/09-10-2019_svar_til_badar_shah_vedr._personoplysninger_paa_jobnet.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3juYyBtiL-25s43D8jwtEz8Wp_HkEu-V6uR176w0O5Fjo6gDENZ8Efgs7U, (Access date: 3 February 2020).

who originate from the Global South are evaluated to be at a higher risk.¹² Nevertheless, several jurists and human rights advocates have highlighted that acquiring information on citizens' ethnicity, race, faith, and sexuality without their consent is against EU law and that it discriminates and stigmatises the citizens affected by it.¹³

Education

In 2019, the Social Democrats campaigned in the Danish general elections with several promises to continue strict integration policies. One of these campaign promises was to remove public funding of Muslim independent schools in Denmark because of a suspicion they are not sufficiently promoting Danish values of freedom, democracy, and gender equality. Following their electoral win, the Social Democrats implemented an audit of 17 independent schools out of which 7 schools were Muslim schools. With only 25 Muslim schools out of 558 independent schools in Denmark, there is a significant overrepresentation of Muslim schools in this audit. One can wonder why this overrepresentation exits; egregiously, one of the selection criteria for the audit is that a school has at least 50% non-Western students. This demonstrates the legal loophole the state has created with the category of 'non-Western' to be able to target Muslim citizens. The majority of these students are presumably Danish citizens, but as explained in the introduction, 'non-Western immigrants and descendants' is a category often used as a placeholder for Muslim.

The Social Democratic government (with the support of the Danish People's Party) seems to be gearing up to attempt to restrict public funding to these schools. *Venstre* and the Conservative People's Party, however, are voicing caution. They argue that the government's use of 'non-Western students' as reasoning for restricting access to public funds can be viewed as discriminatory on the basis of their ethnicity. The Social Liberals are also voicing concern as they worry that the government's attempt at closing down Muslim schools could be an infringement of the rights and freedom of schooling in Denmark.¹⁷

^{12.} Author's personal communication with CEDAR activists regarding their email correspondence with the National Board of Labour and Employment.

^{13. &}quot;Jobcentre anklages for ulovlig diskrimination: Rammer særlig gruppe ledige", *Radio24syv*, 7 October 2019, https://www.a4nu.dk/artikel/jurister-jobcentre-diskriminerer-med-nyt-profileringsvaerktoej, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{14.} Anders Redder, "Nye tal bekymrer: Muslimske friskoler står foran skærpet tilsyn", Kristligt Dagblad, 25 November 2019, https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/nye-tal-bekymrer-saerligt-muslimske-friskoler-testes-demokratisk-sindelag, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{15.} Ibid.

^{16.} Ritzau, "Muslimske friskoler står foran skærpet tilsyn", Politiken Skoleliv, 26 November 2019, https://skoleliv.dk/nyheder/art7517440/Muslimske-friskoler-st%C3%A5r-foran-sk%C3%A6rpet-tilsyn, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{17. &}quot;Ny rapport bestyrker S-ønske om at lukke de muslimske friskoler" Politiken Skoleliv, 24 April 2019, https://skoleliv.dk/nyheder/art7156232/Ny-rapport-bestyrker-S-%C3%B8nske-om-at-lukke-de-muslimske-friskoler, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

The schools that are being audited had until December 6, 2019, to answer a number of questions posed by the Ministry of Education on how the schools handle issues pertaining to equality, 'social control', and the curriculum in Christianity Studies. In early February 2020, the media reported that 24 Muslim schools receive financial support from the government despite the government's campaign promise to stop funding independent schools with more than 50% non-Western students. 18 However, the Justice Ministry has cautioned that discriminating schools based on ethnicity is against the Danish constitution and the government has not yet found a way to implement their campaign promise without transgressing the constitution. It will be important in 2020 to see if the government succeeds in finding a way to discriminate against Muslim independent schools without transgressing the Danish constitution. Five Muslim schools have already been closed since 2017 through allegations of undemocratic schooling (e.g. finding teaching material on 'jihad' in a school's copy room)¹⁹ or funding from anonymous donors. The government's current approach seems to be looking for ways of changing current legislation to make it particularly harder for Muslim schools to get public funding as well as funding from anonymous donors. However, they have to formulate a legal language that bypasses laws of rights and freedoms that prohibit discriminating citizens based on ethnicity and religion.20

Politics

The year 2019 saw a change of government in Denmark. The left-leaning parties won with a majority of seats (91 mandates out of 179), leaving the right-wing parties defeated. The Danish People's Party (DPP) in particular lost a large number of seats: from 21% in 2015 to 8.7% in 2019.²¹ For many minorities and anti-racism campaigners, this shift in government presented a hope that the harsh political rhetoric and legislation against Muslims and refugees would change for the better. However, the Social Democrats, who won 25.9% of the national vote, ran a campaign on continuing the harsh legislation against Muslims, ethnic minorities, and refugees/asylum seekers,²² and they were thereby able to attract a large number of DPP voters. Instead of creating a coalition government with other left parties that also won many seats

^{18.} Martin Borre, "Socialdemokratiet: Vi gør noget ved muslimske friskoler inden næste valg", Berlingske, 10 February 2020, https://www.berlingske.dk/politik/socialdemokratiet-vi-goer-noget-ved-muslimske-friskoler-inden-naeste-valg (Access date: 18 February 2020).

^{19.} Henrik Jensen and Jens Anton Bjørnager, "Efter alvorlige lovbrud: Muslimsk friskole mister statslig million-støtte", Berlingske, 27 September 2017, https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/efter-alvorlige-lovbrud-muslimsk-friskole-mister-statslig-millionstoette (Access date: 18 February 2020).

^{20. &}quot;Ny rapport bestyrker S-ønske om at lukke de muslimske friskoler", Politiken Skoleliv.

^{21.} Elis Gjevori, "Denmark's Left Wins Election by Adopting Right-Wing Rhetoric", TRT World, 6 June 2019, https://www.trtworld.com/europe/denmark-s-left-wins-election-by-adopting-right-wing-rhetoric-27298, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{22.} Ibid.

(e.g. Social Liberals or Red-Green Alliance) giving the government a clear majority government, the new prime minister Mette Frederiksen decided to form a minority single-party government with the approval of the center-left parties.²³ This would mean that although the political left parties would be the government's supporting parties, Frederiksen's government was free to create alliances across the political spectrum. In practice, forming a minority government allows the Social Democrats to collaborate with the political right on issues pertaining to creating a harsher environment for refugees, immigrants, and Muslim minorities, while simultaneously collaborating with left-wing parties on issues of welfare, environment, etc. Nevertheless, the strong mandate of the leftist parties means that the Social Democrats cannot completely neglect the left in their political issues.

Because of this development, general Islamophobic political attitudes have risen in recent years. Right-centrist policies seem to have continued in the latter half of 2019 with the Social Democrats in government. They have introduced legislation on citizenships, 'ghetto'-policies, and a general continuation of Islamophobic political rhetoric. For instance, in October 2019, MP Ida Auken, a member of the left-centre Social Liberal Party, published an opinion piece about meeting with a Muslim male citizen who shook her hand as he entered her office, but explained that he preferred not to shake hands in general because of his religious beliefs. In response to this explanation, Auken published an opinion piece in which she refers to the man as an 'idiot' for not wanting physical contact with her and discloses a number of her prejudicial views towards Muslim men (e.g. as oppressive). As an elected politician, this opinion piece can be perceived as a promotion of Islamophobic rhetoric directed at Muslims.²⁴ It is highly problematic that as an elected politician who is ethnically Danish and with the power to condemn an already targeted representative of a religious minority, Auken puts herself as a victim vis-à-vis a citizen who has no public power to defend himself. This abuse of power was even criticised by Auken's colleague, Jens Rohde, who called her out on her controversial article. He argued that as an elected politician, any meetings with citizens should be confidential. In this case, Rohde contends, Auken did not only breach this confidentiality but also put herself in the position of the victim of this encounter, when in fact she is part of a powerful privileged political elite.²⁵

^{23.} Kristine Korsgaard, "Mette Frederiksen bliver statsminister for en ren S-regering: Svære kampe venter", Altinget, 26 June 2019, https://www.altinget.dk/artikel/mette-frederiksen-bliver-statsminister-for-en-ren-s-regering, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{24.} Ida Auken, "Ida Auken er rasende: Manden, der kom ind på mit kontor, var tydeligvis idiot!", Politiken, 1 October 2019, https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art7416529/Manden-der-kom-ind-p%C3%A5-mit-kontor-vartydeligvis-idiot, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

^{25.} Jens Rohde, "Jens Rohde: Hvad ville der ske, hvis jeg som MAND kaldte en kvinde for IDIOT, blot fordi hun hilser med hånden på hjertet og ikke ved at tage min hånd?", Politiken, 15 October 2019, https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art7440850/Hvad-ville-der-ske-hvis-jeg-som-MAND-kaldte-en-kvinde-for-IDIOT-blot-fordi-hun-hilser-med-h%C3%A5nden-p%C3%A5-hjertet-og-ikke-ved-at-tage-min-h%C3%A5nd?shareToken=W3X-vEaAAHPHw, (Access date: 30 January 2020).

The New Right won 4 seats in the 2019 general elections. The party is a new right-wing political party established in 2015, and believes the Danish People's Party - previously the most anti-immigration/Islamophobic party in Danish politics - is too lenient on immigration issues and issues pertaining to Muslims. One MP from the New Right, Mette Thiesen, shared on her Facebook profile that, as a member of the citizenship committee in parliament, she would make sure to vote against any citizenship application originating from Muslim-majority countries. Questioned on this discriminatory logic, she argued that as long as the parliament does not address the inherent issues of immigration (i.e. allowing Muslim migrants residency), she would not change her position.²⁶



Folk fra muslimske lande skal IKKE have dansk statsborgerskab!

I dag har jeg været til mit første møde i Indfødsretsudvalget. Jeg regner ikke med, at mit arbejde bliver svært i det udvalg. I Nye Borgerlig vil vi nemlig stemme nej til at give dansk statsborgerskab til folk, der kommer fra lande baseret på muslimske værdier.

Politikerne har smidt om sig med danske statsborgerskaber. At få dansk statsborgerskab en stor gave. Den gave skal vi passe på og ikke smide om os med.

Dansk statsborgerskab skal selvfølgelig ikke give til indvandrere og efterkommere fra lande, hvor v ved, at indvandrerne og deres efterkommere lan oftere begår kriminalitet end danskere, når de kommer hertil.

Del gerne

Figure 1: Mette Thiesen describes how she plans to reject citizenship applications from people originating from Muslim-majority countries.²⁷

A few days before Thiesen's social media post, an opinion piece on the Danish citizenship procedures was published in the newspaper *Politiken*. In this article, the author questioned Christian Langballe (Danish People's Party), a long-time chairman and member of the citizenship committee, who admitted to always voting

^{26.} Philip Sune Dam, "Nye Borgerlige-profil: 'Folk fra muslimske lande skal ikke have dansk statsborgerskab", Berlingske, 16 August 2019, https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/nye-borgerlige-profil-folk-fra-muslimske-lande-skal-ikke-have-dansk, (Access date: 10 February 2020).

^{27.} Mette Thiesen, Facebook, 15 August 2019, https://www.facebook.com/mette.thiesen/?__tn__=%2C-d%2CP-R&eid=ARDsYb7MwH1l7KHDJuwZUDM28Zy17i-g_aDnZDgKgNvw8RGu2SIl3pAsVirZ6fTqOli-8UV2iV55Qtv_B, (Access date: 10 February 2020).

against a citizenship application if the applicant was from "a distant Middle Eastern country". He further explained that he had a political interest in reducing the number of Danish Muslim citizens. The article highlights how the approach of both Langballe and Thiesen is a politisation of citizenship rather than about the individual applicants.²⁸ This is a worrying development in Danish politics, as the political motivations of MPs in the citizenship committee can discriminate applicants from Muslim-majority countries with impunity. These proceedings happen behind closed doors and with no public transparency, and thus there is no way of contesting rejections on the basis of discrimination.

Media

Minorities in general, and Muslims in particular, are often excluded from public debates regarding minorities' experiences in Denmark but also other contemporary and global political issues though they may profess appropriate forms of expertise.²⁹ Unfortunately, the lack of recognition in Danish media discourse of its own bias and reproduction of political rhetoric towards minorities, means that the general representation of Muslims continues to be that of 'Other' within Danish society. For instance, the culture editor of the newspaper Berlingske, Anne Sofie Hermansen wrote an opinion piece criticising the nomination of a song written by the Danish Muslim artist Isam Bachiri (Isam B) in the Danish School Songbook. In her article, she accuses Isam B of being a "Muslim fundamentalist" who should not be included in the Danish songbook, which is a national representation of Danish identity.³⁰ She includes a number of unverified examples that present Isam B as someone who is incompatible with Danish culture and criticises the choice of including him in the songbook as an attempt to be politically correct.³¹ This example demonstrates the level of power the media has in both how debates on Muslims are framed as well as journalists' capacity to discredit individual Muslims to promote a nationalist and Islamophobic agenda.

A few Muslim public speakers have been able to gain popularity in media debates by publishing opinion pieces regarding experiences of discrimination partic-

^{28.} Thomas Borchert, "Tysker i Danmark: 'I har gjort det til en absurd øvelse at forsøge at blive statsborger", Politiken, 10 August 2019, https://politiken.dk/debat/kroniken/art7321358/I-har-gjort-det-til-en-absurd-%C3%B8velse-at-fors%C3%B8ge-at-blive-statsborger, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{29.} Mrutyuanjaj Mishra, "Danske mediers dækning er racistisk" Information, 7 May 2019, https://www.information.dk/debat/2019/05/danske-mediers-daekning-racistisk, (Access date: 11 March 2020).

^{30.} Anne Sofie Hermansen, "Hvad skal en fundamentalistisk muslim som Isam B i Højskolesangbogen?" Berlingske, 8 August 2019, https://www.berlingske.dk/aok/anne-sophia-hermansen-hvad-skal-en-fundamentalistisk-muslim-som-isam-b-i, (Access date: 4 February 2020).

^{31.} Steffen Groth, "Isam B udråbes til muslimsk fundamentalist i Berlingske", POV, 9 August 2019, https://pov.international/personagreb-pa-isam-b-omtaget-af-dampene-fra-antiislamiske-netfora/, (Access date: 4 February 2020).

ularly pertaining to Muslims as well as calling out the racism in society.³² This is progress. Yet without a conversation about the lack of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in Danish news media -not only in representation of the topics that are being discussed but also who decides what topics and issues are reported on - the racist, Islamophobic, and often reductionist representation of Muslims in Danish media will most likely continue.

Justice System

Several bills have been implemented in 2019 that target Muslim and/or non-Western citizens: e.g. forced handshake during citizenship ceremonies; a 'paradigm-shift' in immigration/asylum procedures focused on repatriation rather than settlement; and citizenship deprivation of dual citizenship. For the sake of brevity, this report will focus on the last point of citizenship deprivation of dual citizens, specifically targeting 'foreign fighters' who have travelled to Syria and presumed to have joined so-called ISIS. Legislation was introduced to deprive dual citizens of their Danish citizenship easily by political means. This seems to set a problematic precedence for how the government deals with dual citizens in general, particularly Muslim dual citizens. The change in legislation was introduced through an emergency vote on the issue of depriving citizenship of Danish citizens with dual citizenship through the Minister of Immigration and Integration rather than by the traditional judicial procedures. It thus gives one individual - a politician - full power and authority to deprive dual citizens of their Danish citizenship outside of legal procedures.³³ The Danish government is being pressured to take back its citizens captured and stranded in prisons in Syria and neighbouring regions. With this bill, the government is attempting to find a way around it. The bill won a majority vote with the support of parties from the right-centre, mainly Venstre and Danish People's Party in October 2019, only a day after the bill was first introduced to parliament.

The bill has been heavily criticised by other politicians, legal experts, and civil rights organisations. Some of the arguments they raise is that the new legislation threatens the division of power in governance as well as being a threat to the Danish judicial system, which already has legal procedures in place to tackle treason as well as other charges related to 'foreign fighters'. As of November 2019, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) could declare that around 35 'foreign fighters' are currently in the conflict zone. Most of them, however, are Danish citizens and very few are dual

^{32.} Tarek Hussein, "Antidemokraterne i DF", Altinget, 14 June 2019, https://www.altinget.dk/artikel/tarek-hussein-antidemokraterne-i-df, (Access date: 4 February 2020).

^{33.} Jeppe Sahlholdt, "Omstridt lov om fremmedkrigere er vedtaget med stemmer fra V og DF", Altinget, 24 October 2019, https://www.altinget.dk/artikel/omstridt-lov-om-fremmedkrigere-er-vedtaget-med-stemmer-fra-v-og-df, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{34.} Philip Sune Dam and Frederikke Palmu Johansen, "Eksperter kommer med hard kritik af nyt lovforslag: 'På kanten af menneskerettigheder", Berlingske, 15 October 2019, https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/eksperter-kommer-med-haard-kritik-af-nyt-lovforslag-paa-kanten-af, (Access date 2 February 2020).

citizens.³⁵ This has made some critics argue that it is mostly political 'spin' to introduce this bill, because Danish citizens cannot be rejected entry into Denmark.³⁶

Internet

Online media, especially social media, are tools that are actively used to promote and enhance an Islamophobic public rhetoric. In 2019, this pattern continued, where right-wing politicians perpetuated Islamophobia on social media platforms. One such example was in late 2019, when an ad from a major grocery store chain presumably displayed Danish Christmas pastries as 'winter pastries'. The picture went viral especially among anti-Muslim groups who perceived the picture as an accommodation of Muslims who do not celebrate Christmas at the expense of 'real Danes' and Danish Christmas traditions.³⁷ These viral posts were promoted not only by nationalist individuals and blog sites, but also by Danish politicians from the political right. The grocery store later explained that they still sold traditional Danish Christmas pastries - they simply added 'winter pastries' to their bakery selection. The whole ordeal, however, demonstrates how Islamophobic rhetoric and fake news can quickly go viral online without much fact-checking – thus legitimising Islamophobic politics and populist rhetoric.



Figure 2: Picture of "winter pastries" instead of "Christmas pastries" circulated on Facebook by right-wing politicians. Printed in Lars Dahlager, "Nationalister raser over Føtex' vinterbolle – men de burde nok lige have tjekket historien". 38

^{35.} Emma Busk, "De dansken fremmedkrigere: Her er de nu", Ekstra Bladet, 22 November 2019, https://ekstrabladet. dk/nyheder/politik/danskpolitik/de-danske-fremmedkrigere-her-er-de-nu/7882892, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{36.} Theis Lange Olsen, "Syrienkriger anholdt: Professor beskylder politikere for at være hyklere", DR Indland, 12 November 2019, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/syrienkriger-anholdt-professor-beskylder-politikere-vaere-hyklere, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{37.} Lars Dahlager, "Nationalister raser over Føtex' vinterbolle – men de burde nok lige have tjekket historien", Politiken, 15 November 2019, https://politiken.dk/forbrugogliv/art7493846/Nationalister-raser-over-F%C3%B8tex-vinterbolle-%E2%80%93-men-de-burde-nok-lige-have-tjekket-historien, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{38.} Lars Dahlager, "Nationalister raser over Føtex' vinterbolle – men de burde nok lige have tjekket historien", Politiken, 15 November 2019, https://politiken.dk/forbrugogliv/art7493846/Nationalister-raser-over-F%C3%B8tex-vinterbolle-%E2%80%93-men-de-burde-nok-lige-have-tjekket-historien, (Access date: 11 March 2020).

While social media platforms have given Islamophobes an open forum to promote anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobia, they have also proved to be an important resource in anti-racist and anti-Islamophobic mobilisation. Anti-racist NGOs have been able to collaborate, engage, and promote each other's events, reports, and work through the use of social media platforms. Furthermore, Muslims, who have experienced Islamophobic abuse, or Danes who have witnessed minorities becoming victims of racist transgressions have used social media to bring awareness to these issues. They have thus been able to bring public awareness to issues that are often neglected in political and media discourse. One example of a positive use of social media platforms was the mobilisation that happened during the 2019 general elections where Muslim citizens established the Facebook group "Muslimer til stemmeboksene" ("Muslims to the voting booths"), which quickly grew to several thousand members. The group promoted Muslim participation in the general elections, mobilising group members to scrutinise politicians' views on issues that were important to Danish Muslims, i.e. who would work against racist, Islamophobic, and anti-immigration policies. This created an interesting debate following the elections, which questioned the democratic validity of such popular mobilisation.³⁹ This debate demonstrates how Muslim citizens can be demonised whenever they engage with the political structures. Muslims are often represented as anti-democratic for not engaging in Danish politics, and yet, in the 2019 elections, they were perceived to be a threat to Danish democracy for politically mobilising to promote democratic involvement. Today, over six months following the elections, the Facebook group has a member count of more than 24,000 members, who use the platform to share and discuss political news regarding Muslims and ethnic minorities.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

The developments noted in the *European Islamophobia Report 2018* on central figures in the Danish Islamophobia network seem to have continued in 2019. For instance, Rasmus Paludan, party leader of Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*), has organised anti-Muslim demonstrations throughout neighbourhoods with a large number of Muslim residents, where he has burnt a copy of the Quran under large police protection. ⁴⁰ During one such demonstration, the repercussions of his demonstration resulted in clashes between the police and young male residents who were provoked by Paludan and his followers. Paludan argues that he is using his freedom

^{39.} Klaus Dohm, "Muslimsk mobilisering af vælgere vækker bekymring for øget polarisering", Jyllands-Posten, 9 June 2019, https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE11433173/muslimsk-mobilisering-af-vælgere-vækker-bekymring-for-oeget-polarisering/, (Access date: 3 February 2020).

^{40.} Peter Thomsen, "Blågårds Plads efter Paludan kom forbi: 'Han vandt. İ går fik han det, som han ville", Berlingske, 15 April 2019, https://www.berlingske.dk/hovedstaden/blaagaards-plads-efter-paludan-kom-forbi-han-vandt.i-gaar-fik-han-det, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

of speech to protest against the presence of Muslims and Islam in Denmark. Nevertheless, burning the Quran in a neighbourhood with a large number of Muslim residents can be perceived as an emphasis of his power to discriminate verbally against their religious beliefs with impunity and under police protection. In turn, this can be perceived as *symbolic* racist violence where the victims have little legal recourse for action. It is important to highlight that the debate that followed this incidence focused on the violent clashes between the youth in the neighbourhood and the police with little attention to the extreme measures Paludan utilises in his rhetoric. In the first half of 2019, leading up to the general elections, the Danish police force estimated that approximately 100 million DKK had been used to protect Paludan and his party's election campaign. Paludan qualified to run for the general election in 2019, and although he only received 1.8% of the general vote and no mandate in parliament, his party Hard Line did qualify to receive yearly party support of 2 million DKK for the next four years until the next general election in order to continue their political work.

It will be important in 2020 to monitor not only the obvious Islamophobes of the right in Denmark, but also observe how the political left becomes complicit in normalising Islamophobic rhetoric that seeks to demonise Muslim citizens with little debate about religious accommodation of minorities to ensure upholding the Danish constitutional right to freedom of religion.

Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

There have been a number of positive developments in civil society mobilising on anti-racism in Denmark with a particular focus on anti-Muslim racism. Approximately 130 psychologists have formed a professional network working against discrimination. They published an opinion piece highlighting how the debate about racialized minorities can affect the physical, social, and mental health of these citizens. With this article, they added an important professional voice critiquing the problematic effects of discrimination and racism against particular minorities.

A number of NGOs have created a coalition to work particularly against the 'ghetto'-policies that took effect in 2019, which will be implemented through the

^{41.} Emma Toft, "Politiet har brugt over 100 millioner på at beskytte Paludan i år", DR Indland, 11 June 2019, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/politiet-har-brugt-over-100-millioner-paa-beskytte-paludan-i-aar, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{42.} Lars Lindevall, "Stram Kurs får ingen plads i Folketinget – men millioner i partistøtte", DR Nyheder, 6 June 2019, https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/folketingsvalg/stram-kurs-faar-ingen-plads-i-folketinget-men-millioner-i, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{43.} Naderah Parwani and Iram Khawaja, "Kroniken: Tonen i debatten er sundhedsskadelig", Politiken, 13 September 2019, https://politiken.dk/debat/kroniken/art7374320/Tonen-i-debatten-er-sundhedsskadelig, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

next couple of years. Furthermore, in 2019, NGOs demonstrated a greater ability to engage with the international community to raise awareness of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia in Denmark. For instance, the Centre for Danish-Muslim Relations (CEDAR), SOS Racisme Denmark, Women in Dialogue, Refugees Welcome, *Almen Modstand* (Common Resistance), DEMOS, and ENAR Denmark created a coalition to contribute to a shadow report on the Danish 'ghetto'-policies to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. ⁴⁴ The UN concluded that the 'ghetto'-policies were particularly discriminatory against non-Western immigrants and descendants creating a clear differentiation between ethnic Danish citizens and non-Western citizens. Other international civil rights organisations have likewise been important supporters of anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia NGOs in Denmark. They have offered important encouragement and support to grassroots organisations to collaborate and mobilise on issues they have in common, particularly related to tackling the discriminatory nature of the government's ghetto policies.

The way that anti-racism NGOs have been able to collaborate and support each other's work in 2019 is an indication of civil society's growing awareness and motivation to combat and protest against the structural racism that all minorities experience.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This report has highlighted some of the general tendencies and issues of Islamophobia in Denmark in 2019. The general election in the summer 2019 meant a change of government from the centre-right majority coalition government of *Venstre*, Conservative People's Party, and Danish People's Party to a centre-left minority government of the Social Democrats, and with a majority mandate to the centre-left parties. Many minorities and anti-racist campaigners hoped that the change of government would mean less racist and nationalistic discourse in political rhetoric. However, as this report documents, the general Islamophobic tendencies observed in 2018 have continued in the following year. This is unsurprising: research has shown that xenophobia in political discourse is not a partisan issue, but can be found across the political spectrum.⁴⁵

The Social Democrats campaigned on harsh immigration policies towards non-Western immigrants and asylum seekers; promised to implement the 'ghetto'-policies some of which particularly target Muslim citizens; and promised to increase sur-

^{44.} Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "Concluding Observations on Sixth Periodic Report of Denmark", United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission, 2019, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fDNK%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en; John Graversgaard and Liz Fekete, "Denmark's 'Ghetto Package' – Discrimination Enshrined in Law", Institute of Race Relations, 21 November 2019, http://www.irr.org.uk/news/denmarks-ghetto-package-discrimination-enshrined-in-law/?fbclid=IwAR1esCcEAk7XJRUyEtOs9U3YJea2_IR1is5_IXGsKXRDhRUWrxO-AX-kSkc, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

^{45.} Sivamohan Valluvan, *The Clamour of Nationalism: Race and Nation in Twenty-First-Century Britain*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester: 2019).

veillance and attempt to shut down as many Muslim independent schools as possible. With the Social Democrats continuing ethnonationalist strategies that seek to differentiate between ethnic white Danes and non-Western Danes (who are presumed to be Muslim), 2019 has proven to be a year where it was not only the traditional right and nationalist voices who promoted Islamophobic behaviour. Instead, the traditional left seemed to have adopted a similar rhetoric and helped normalise Islamophobia. Nevertheless, 2019 has also been an important year for civil society and anti-racist NGOs to collaborate and challenge this rhetoric both in policy (especially regarding the 'ghetto'-policies) and in everyday life by using social media platforms and other open forums to bring awareness to issues of racism and Islamophobia in particular.

The following are a few policy recommendations that focus on bringing public and political awareness to the issues of Islamophobia:

- Political and public recognition of Islamophobia as a real societal issue that discriminates, affects, and limits Muslim citizens' lives, prospects, and feelings of inclusion in Danish society.
- Invest in public bodies to document and address experiences of Islamophobia beyond hate crimes – including experiences of discrimination in educational institutions, employment opportunities, housing, and in interactions with social and health institutions.
- Invest in research that explores issues and experiences of Islamophobia as a unique form of racism and discrimination that targets Muslim citizens or citizens perceived to be Muslim.
- Promote civil society initiatives that work against racism and discrimination in general, and Islamophobia in particular.

Chronology

- **01.01.2019:** Law requiring citizen applicants shake hands with public officials during citizenship ceremony come into effect. The legislation was voted in by parliament in late 2018 to oppose Muslim citizen applicants' *potential* refusal of shaking hands with public officials of the opposite gender.
- 16.01.2019: State attorney closed the case of a woman who was verbally assaulted while wearing a niqab, claiming the woman was not threatened and could therefore not press charges on that basis, but neglected to consider the case as a hate crime.
- **21.02.2019:** Government introduced a 'paradigm shift' in immigration policies with an emphasis on repatriation of immigrants and refugees as soon as legally possibly (according to international conventions).⁴⁶

^{46.} Folketinget, "L 140 Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven, integrationsloven, repatrieringsloven og forskellige andre love", Folketinget, 21 February 2019, https://www.ft.dk/samling/20181/lovforslag/l140/index. htm, (Access date: 2 February 2020).

- **01.07.2019:** As part of the 'ghetto'-policies, one-year-old toddlers, living in 'ghetto'-neighbourhoods and whose parents cannot speak Danish beyond a 9th grade level, will be forced to attend mandatory day care for at least 25 hours per week.⁴⁷
- **15.08.2019:** Right-wing MPs admit of voting against citizenship applications on the basis of applicants originating from Muslim-majority countries.
- 07.10.2019: It was revealed that Danish jobcentres obtain information
 from national registers on unemployed Danish citizens who are categorised as 'non-Western immigrants and descendants' without the consent or
 knowledge of the citizens. Citizens have to formally contact governing bodies to have this information withdrawn from their jobcentre profiles.
- 24.10.2019: Legislation passed to allow the Minister of Immigration and Integration to deprive dual citizens their Danish citizenship to limit foreign fighters from Syria returning to Denmark.
- 12.11.2019: UN criticised Denmark's 'ghetto'-policies on the basis of discrimination of minorities.
- **06.12.2019:** Auditing of seven Muslim independent schools.

^{47. &}quot;Obligatorisk læringstilbud til 1-årige i udsatte boligområder og skærpet straf til ledere for pligtforsømmelser", Ministry of Children and Education, https://www.uvm.dk/dagtilbud/love-og-regler--formaal-og-aftaler/aftalen-om-parallelsamfund/om-aftalen, (Access date: 4 February 2020).