

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN  
**DENMARK**  
NATIONAL REPORT 2022

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## The Author

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## Executive summary

The year 2022 was an eventful year both in relation to Islamophobic incidences and new anti-racist initiatives in Denmark.

The public debate has been consumed with two legal cases that question the effectiveness of the Danish judicial system and its ability to ensure that there is no miscarriage of justice in court cases. One case was about a young man, who was convicted of terrorism for allegedly having travelled to Syria. However, he claims he was working for the Danish Security Services. Another case concerns two Muslim Danish-Somali sisters whose parents were convicted for allegedly circumcising their daughters. Despite the family's legal appeal, the Court of Appeal has refused to reopen the case.

One of the big topics in the field of education was the question of fundamental Danish values in primary school and high school. This included a public discussion about whether the Danish cartoon controversy should be a mandatory part of the history curriculum in primary schools.

Another important topic in the field of education was related to a government-elected commission which recommended a hijab ban in elementary schools. The recommendation sparked a lot of criticism by Muslim women, the Danish Union of Teachers, researchers, and the general public for its superficial conclusions.

National elections took place in November 2022, and a new right-wing party, the Denmark Democrats, managed to win 14 mandates. The Social Democrats remain in power and have formed a majority cross-party with Denmark's Liberal Party and the Moderates.

A survey on ethnic profiling showed that the risk of being charged by the police without a conviction is 27% higher for immigrants and 45% higher for descendants compared to people of Danish origin. Several surveys on employment and media show that there is still a lack of representation and equality, regarding pay gaps, leadership positions and media representation. In media, ethnic minorities make up only 3.5% of the news sources, even though they constitute 14% of Denmark's population.

## Sammenfatning

Året 2022 har været et begivenhedsrigt år både hvad angår islamofobiske hændelser, men også i forhold til nye antiracistiske initiativer.

Den offentlige debat har været opslugt af to juridiske sager som stillede spørgsmål ved det juridiske systems evne til at sikre borgere fra justitsmord. Den ene af sagerne handler om en terrorismedømt mand, der påstår, at han arbejdede for Politiets Efterretningstjeneste og Forsvarets Efterretningstjeneste under sine rejser til Syrien. Den anden sag handler om et dansk-somalisk forældrepar, der er blevet dømt for at have omskåret deres to døtre. På trods af forældrenes appel, har den særlige Klageret afvist at genoptage sagen.

Et af de store emner inden for uddannelse, har drejet sig om såkaldte “danske værdier” i folkeskolen og gymnasiet. Debatten har bl.a. fokuseret på om hvorvidt karrikaturkrisen skal være en obligatorisk del af historiefagets pensum i folkeskolen.

Et andet stort emne inden for uddannelse, drejer sig om en regeringsnedsat kommission, der anbefalede et tørklædeforbud i grundskolen. Anbefalingen affødte en del kritik af bl.a. muslimske kvinder, Danmarks Lærerforening og den generelle befolkning, for at drage overfladiske konklusioner.

Folketingsvalget fandt sted i november 2022, og det lykkedes et nyt højreorienteret parti, Danmarksdemokraterne, at få 14 mandater. Den nye brede regering består af Socialdemokratiet, Venstre og Moderaterne.

En undersøgelse angående etnisk profilering blandt politiet viser, at sandsynligheden for at blive sigtet uden fældende afgørelse er 27% højere for indvandrere end for personer med dansk oprindelse. Tallet for efterkommere er 45%. Adskillige undersøgelser vedrørende beskæftigelse og medier, viser, at der stadig er mangel på repræsentation og lighed. Både hvad angår lønniveauet mellem en “ikke-vestlig” og en person med dansk oprindelse og hvad angår direktionslokalerne og bestyrelsesposterne. I mediesammenhæng, udgør etniske minoriteter kun 3,5% af nyhedskilderne, selvom de udgør 14% af Danmarks befolkning.

## Country Profile

### EIR 2021

**Country:** Denmark

**Type of Regime:** Constitutional monarchy

**Form of Government:** Unitary parliamentarism

**Ruling Parties:** Socialdemokratiet (Social Democratic Party), Venstre (Denmark's Liberal Party), and Moderaterne (Moderates) - a majority cross-party government that consists of parties across the political spectrum. There has not been a majority government in Denmark since 1993/94.

**Opposition Parties:** Green Left, Social Liberal Party, Denmark Democrats, Liberal Alliance, Conservative Party, Red-Green Alliance, New Right, Danish People's Party, Alternative

**Last Elections: 2023 National Elections:** The Social Democratic Party won 27.5% of the votes, Denmark's Liberal Party won 13.3%, and the Moderates won 9.3% of the votes.

**Total Population:** 5.9 million

**Major Languages:** Danish

**Official Religion:** Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark (Church of Denmark)

**Statistics on Islamophobia:** The 2021 Hate Crime Report by the National Police of Denmark (*Rigspolitiet*) shows that the police have registered fewer hate crimes in 2021 than in 2020.

**Statistics on Racism and Discrimination:** Statistics on racism and discrimination are lacking.

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

**Muslim Population (% of Population):** est. 320,000 (5.5%)

**Main Muslim Community Organizations:** Dansk-Tyrkisk Islamisk Stiftelse, Det Islamiske Trossamfund (DIT), Dansk Islamisk Center (DIC), Muslimsk Ungdom i Danmark (MUNIDA), Dansk Islamisk Trossamfund, Minhaj-ul-Quran Denmark, Dansk Muslimsk Union (DMU), Dansk Islamisk Råd, Imam Ali Moskeen, Muslimernes Fællesråd (MFR), IslamAkademiet, Udforsk Islam

**Main NGOs combating Islamophobia:** Centre for Muslims' Rights in Denmark (CEDA), Sameksistens.dk, SOS Racisme, Kvinder I Dialog (Women in Dialogue), European Network Against Racism-Denmark (ENAR Denmark), Center for Forebyggelse af Eksklusion (Centre for Prevention of Exclusion), DEMOS, Muslimernes Fællesråd (MFR), iChange, Psykologfagligt Netværk mod Diskrimination (PND)

**Far-Right Parties:** Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti), The New Right (Nye Borgerlige), Denmark Democrats (Danmarksdemokraterne)

**Far-Right Movements:** Generation Identitær, For Frihed (former Pegida Danmark), Nordfront, Nordisk Modstandsbevægelse (Nordic Resistance Movement)

**Far-Right Terrorist Organizations:** Feuerkrieg Division

**Limitations to Islamic Practices**

- **Hijab Ban:** No. The parliament rejected a bill-proposal to ban public servants from wearing religious symbols in December 2020.
- **Halal Slaughter Ban:** No, although there is a ban on slaughtering a non-stunned animal, which to some Muslims is a crucial part of halal slaughter.
- **Minaret Ban:** No
- **Circumcision Ban:** No
- **Burka Ban:** Yes, since 2018 it has been illegal to cover one's face without a valid reason in public places; religion is not considered a valid reason.
- **Prayer Ban:** No

## Introduction

The year 2022 was marked by allegations of miscarriage of justice, as two major stories unfolded in public. One about a young Danish-Syrian man, who was charged with terrorism for the work he claimed he did as a secret agent for the Danish Security and Intelligence Service and later the Danish Defence Intelligence Service. Another, regarded a Danish-Somali family, where the parents served time for a crime they claim that they did not commit.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the limited space in this report, it has not been possible to elaborate on all Islamophobic incidents that unfolded in Denmark in 2022. These incidents include the severe legislation that continues to affect Syrian female refugees by revoking their residence permits on the premise that Damascus is considered safe to return by the Danish government.<sup>2</sup> However, without an agreement between the two governments, the women are placed in dehumanizing centers, and separated from their families and friends. This also includes non-citizens who are born and raised in Denmark, but who, because of strict citizenship rules, continue their struggles for obtaining Danish citizenship.<sup>3</sup>

The year 2022 was marked by national elections that took place in November. The newly formed government is a majority cross-party government that consists of parties across the political spectrum, including the Social Democrats, the Liberal Party of Denmark, and the Moderates. Mette Frederiksen from the Social Democrats was re-elected as prime minister of Denmark.

In June, a new report from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), criticized Denmark for the increasing discrimination and hate speech directed at Muslims, and for not doing enough to combat this discrimination.<sup>4</sup> The Danish government has agreed to create a National Action Plan against Racism; however, the initial work indicates a lack of focus on Islamophobia and racism targeting Muslims disproportionately. The plan's main focus has been on hate crime, hate speech, and racism on an individual level, while neglecting racism on a structural level.<sup>5</sup> This is worrying, as it could indicate a lack of understanding or willingness to al-

1. Frederik Hugo Ledegaard et al, "Forældre blev dømt for omskæringer: Da der opstod tvivl, blev de samme læger sat til at genvurdere sagen", *politiken.dk*, (June 20, 2022), retrieved February 22, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/foraeldre-blev-doemt-omskaringer-da-der-opstod-tvivl-blev-de-samme-laeger-sat-til>
2. Cecilie Lund Kristiansen et al, "Skør udlændingepolitik? Her er otte, der er blevet ramt. Se, hvordan det går dem i dag", *politiken.dk*, (October 17, 2022), retrieved January 26, 2023, from [https://politiken.dk/indland/art9030774/Sk%C3%B8r-udl%C3%A6ndingepolitik-Her-er-otte-der-er-blevet-ramt.-Se-hvordan-det-g%C3%A5r-dem-i-dag?utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Facebook#Echobox=1666011600](https://politiken.dk/indland/art9030774/Sk%C3%B8r-udl%C3%A6ndingepolitik-Her-er-otte-der-er-blevet-ramt.-Se-hvordan-det-g%C3%A5r-dem-i-dag?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1666011600)
3. *ibid.*
4. Steen A. Jørgensen & Ida Sejersdal Dreier, "Ny racisme-rapport: Danmark får kritik for stigende had mod muslimer", *jyllands-posten*, (June 9, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE14119045/ny-racismerapport-danmark-faar-kritik-for-stigende-had-mod-muslimer/>
5. Justitsministeriet, "Regeringen er enig med SF, Radikale Venstre, Enhedslisten, Alternativet og Kristen-demokraterne om at lave en handlingsplan mod racisme", *justitsministeriet.dk*, (January 24, 2022, retrieved February 22, 2023)



ter the structural challenges for Muslims in Denmark that are legitimized through political discourse.

## Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

### Physical and Verbal Attacks

According to the Danish National Police's newly published report on hate crimes for 2021 - the reports are published retrospectively - a total of 164 cases were registered by the police as religiously motivated hate crimes out of a total of 521 registered cases. Out of the 164 religiously motivated hate crimes, 38% targeted Muslims. In comparison, the number was 45% in 2020. Throughout the period 2017-2021, Muslims have accounted for the largest portion (49%) of religiously motivated registered hate crimes, with 389 registered cases out of 792.<sup>6</sup> According to the National Police this is due to Muslims constituting the largest religious minority group in Denmark, and as such, they claim, it is to be expected that the police should receive more reports from Muslims than other people who belong to smaller religious communities.<sup>7</sup> According to the police there has been a fall in registered hate crimes. However, it should be noted that it is the police who assess what constitutes a hate crime. This means that the number of reported hate crimes by Muslims could be much higher than the number registered by the police. According to the Institute for Human Rights, the unreported numbers, could be caused by a lack of reporting by victims, who lack trust that their report will be registered properly by the police, or because many of the reported hate crimes are processed as regular criminal cases by the police.<sup>8</sup>

There have been at least two well-known public verdicts on hate speech towards Muslims. In one, a 35-year-old man was sentenced to 60 days in prison for urging the execution of Muslims.<sup>9</sup> In another case, a man was charged for inciting the killing of Muslims in a video published on YouTube. The man, who is a former member of Rasmus Paludan's party, Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*), was sentenced to four months in jail for the video.<sup>10</sup>

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- ruary 22, 2023, from <https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/pressemeddelelse/regeringen-er-enig-med-sf-radikale-venstre-enhedslisten-alternativet-og-kristendemokraterne-om-at-lave-en-handlingsplan-mod-racisme/>
6. Rigspolitiet, "Hadforbrydelser i 2021 – Rigspolitiets årsrapport vedrørende hadforbrydelser", January, 2023. retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://politi.dk/-/media/mediefiler/landsdaekkende-dokumenter/statistikker/hadforbrydelser/hadforbrydelser-2021.pdf>
  7. Ibid.
  8. Institut for Menneskerettigheder, "Hadforbrydelser", retrieved February 24, 2023, from <https://menneskeret.dk/hadforbrydelser>
  9. Marianne Nielsen, "Mand dømt for hadforbrydelse," *sn.dk*, (June 17, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.sn.dk/odsherred-kommune/mand-doemt-for-hadforbrydelse/>
  10. "Koranafrænder dømt for opfordring til drab på muslimer og trusler mod Zenia Stampe," *redox.dk*, (September 23, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://redox.dk/nyheder/koranafrænder-doemt-for-opfordring-til-drab-paa-muslimer-og-trusler-mod-zenia-stampe/>

In late April 2022, a 15-year-old was arrested and later charged with terrorism for being part of, and inciting others to join, the Feuerkrieg Division (FKD). The FKD originates from another far-right group called Atomwaffen Division and is considered to be a terrorist group by the prosecution in Denmark<sup>11</sup> and in other countries.<sup>12</sup> According to an article, the 15-year-old, among others, in a Telegram chat incited the decapitation of all Muslims and other minorities, and the destruction of a nuclear power plant.<sup>13</sup>

Another case that went viral on social media was an incident in 2021, where Sikandar Siddique, head of the Independent Greens party, and his parents, were verbally attacked with racial slurs in front of the Parliament. The incident prompted a reaction from the prime minister who called it a racist attack.<sup>14</sup> However, in 2022, the Copenhagen Police assessed that the man who attacked Siddique should be prosecuted for harassment of a person in public service or office, but not for a hate crime.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 1:** Screenshot from a video on MP Sikandar Siddiques's Twitter account showing the perpetrator of a verbal attack with racial slurs against him and his parents in front of the Parliament.<sup>16</sup>

11. Frederik Hagemann-Nielsen and Louise Dalsgaard, "15-årig chattede på nynazistisk forum om at halshugge muslimer og bombe atomkraftværk," *dr.dk*, (April 26, 2022), retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/15-aarig-chattede-paa-nynazistisk-forum-om-halshugge-muslimer-og-bombe>
12. Ben Makuch, "British Government Bans Atomwaffen Division As Criminal Terrorist Organization," *vice.com*, (April 21, 2021), retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7ejna/british-government-bans-atomwaffen-division-as-criminal-terrorist-organization>
13. Frederik Hagemann-Nielsen, "16-årig mistænkt for at have tilsluttet sig nynazistisk gruppe: Nu vil anklager have ham tiltalt for terror," *dr.dk*, (November 8, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/16-aarig-mistaenkt-have-tilsluttet-sig-nynazistisk-gruppe-nu-vil-anklager-have-ham>
14. "Mette Frederiksen: Folketingsmedlem blev udsat for racisme," *jyllands-posten.dk*, (October 7, 2021), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE13347654/mette-frederiksen-folketingsmedlem-blev-udsat-for-racisme/>
15. "Mand undgår racisemesag for tilråb mod Siddique og forældre," *tv2.dk*, (January 22, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2022-01-22-mand-undgar-racisemesag-for-tilrab-mod-siddique-og-foraelde>
16. Tweet from Sikandar Siddique, @SikandaSIDDIQUE, retrieved January 25, 2023 from <https://twitter.com/SikandaSIDDIQUE/status/1445365758318596102?s=20&t=LphnLZzfkVbuswkioG0vqA>

A report from the Institute of Human Rights shows that there is a problem with discrimination and ethnic profiling within the police force.<sup>17</sup> The report shows that people from Africa or the Middle East have a significantly greater risk than people of Danish origin of being arrested or charged without being convicted. According to the analysis, the risk of being charged without a conviction is 27% higher for immigrants and 45% higher for their descendants compared to people of Danish origin.<sup>18</sup> Faced with the results of the report, the Danish police responded that they carry out their work based on factual criteria and that they are very aware of preventing discrimination. As such they currently have no further reason to examine why people from Africa or the Middle East are being arrested or charged without being convicted more often than people of Danish origin.<sup>19</sup>

## Employment

In Denmark, 4.9 % of the population has a family background in the Middle East, North Africa, or Turkey. However, according to a study by the analysis company Denominator, the same group only occupies 0.15% of the seats in boardrooms and 1.66 % of the seats on the board of directors in the 100 largest Danish companies.<sup>20</sup> Another survey by Statistics Denmark shows that “non-Westerners” with the same education as their Danish peers earn as much as 8.4% less than their Danish colleagues.<sup>21</sup>

In 2022, two female students won a case in the Equal Treatment Board after having their internships suspended because they greeted their male supervisor by placing their hand on their heart instead of shaking his hand. The board ruled it as indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion and said that a compensation of 25,000 DKR should be paid to each student.<sup>22</sup> The former minister of immigration and integration, Mattias Tesfaye, commented on the case saying it is a Danish value to shake another person’s hand and that it was not a token of good integration to re-

17. Institut for Menneskerettigheder, “Etnisk Profilerings – Hovedresultater fra tre undersøgelser”, *menneskeret.dk*, (Marts 19, 2022), retrieved February 2, 2023, from [https://menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Politi\\_Hovedrapport\\_06.pdf](https://menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Politi_Hovedrapport_06.pdf)
18. “Institut ser problemer med diskrimination i politiet”, *kristeligt-dagblad.dk*, (Marts 19, 2022), retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/institut-ser-problemer-med-diskrimination-i-politiet>
19. Frauke Giebner, “Ny rapport: Politiet har et problem med diskrimination”, *pol.dk*, (March 19, 2022), retrieved February 24, 2023, from <https://politiken.dk/indland/art8667696/Politiet-har-et-problem-med-diskrimination>
20. Henrik Nordskilde, “Vi har mål for, hvor mange kvinder vi vil have i ledelse, men hvor er målene for etniske minoriteter?”, *lederstod.dk*, (October 20, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://www.lederstod.dk/vi-har-maal-for-hvor-mange-kvinder-vi-vil-have-i-ledelse?utm\\_source=linkedin&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=inkluderence\\_ledelse&utm\\_content=interview&cid=sm18001](https://www.lederstod.dk/vi-har-maal-for-hvor-mange-kvinder-vi-vil-have-i-ledelse?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=inkluderence_ledelse&utm_content=interview&cid=sm18001)
21. Henriksen, L.F., L. Holck og S.L. Muhr (2022), “Organizing against inequality: Wage gaps and workplace unionisation among high-skilled migrants”, Working Paper, Copenhagen Business School. Økonomi & Politik: “Den nye magtudredning”, Djøf Forlag, #3-4, (December, 2022), [https://www.djoef-forlag.dk/openaccess/oep/full/OEP\\_3\\_4\\_2022.pdf](https://www.djoef-forlag.dk/openaccess/oep/full/OEP_3_4_2022.pdf)
22. “Muslimske kvinder nægtede at give hånd. Nu får de hver 25.000 kroner i godtgørelse”, *kristeligt-dagblad.dk*, (January 13, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/muslimske-kvinder-naegtede-give-haand-nu-faar-de-hver-25000-kroner-i-godtgoerelse>

ject a handshake.<sup>23</sup> According to the media outlet Nordiske Medier, the municipality has refused to pay the two students the compensation.<sup>24</sup>

## Education

One of the major topics in the field of education was the question of what essential Danish values are and how to teach these in primary school and high school. One of the ongoing discussions involved whether to make it obligatory to teach about the Danish cartoon controversy<sup>25</sup> as part of the history curriculum. The Parliament could not reach an agreement and the subject has been dropped for now.<sup>26</sup> As part of this wider debate on national values, the controversy around a newly published history textbook written by high school teacher and historian Iman Hassani is worth mentioning. The book is about Denmark's cultural encounters with the Middle East from a postcolonial perspective.<sup>27</sup> The textbook quickly became part of the wider national discussion on cultural relativism and national values, and was even mentioned in a social media post by the Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, who wrote,

If there is anything that can destroy a society, it is value relativism. A notion that all values are equally good. If we, as a society, do not dare to define common values, norms and the rules of the game, then it will slowly but surely fall apart (...) If we start to bend the facts according to attitude and religion, then democracy will erode.<sup>28</sup>

As such, Hassani's professional credentials were dismissed, and her ethnic and religious background was emphasized and used to undermine her work.<sup>29</sup>

23. Steen A. Jørgensen, "Tefaye om håndtryk-sag: "Det er en dansk værdi, at man kan hilse på hinanden uanset køn".", *jyllands-posten.dk*, (January 19, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE13656108/tesfaye-om-haandtryksag-det-er-en-dansk-vaerdi-at-man-kan-hilse-paa-hinanden-uaanset-koen/>
24. "Albertslund nægter at betale erstatning til kvinder i håndtrykssag", *nordiskemedier.dk*, (January 28, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://www.nordiskemedier.dk/article/view/831953/albertslund\\_naegter\\_at\\_betale\\_erstatning\\_til\\_kvinder\\_i\\_haandtrykssag](https://www.nordiskemedier.dk/article/view/831953/albertslund_naegter_at_betale_erstatning_til_kvinder_i_haandtrykssag)
25. Peter Hervik, "The Danish Muhammad Cartoon Conflict", *Researchgate.net*, (January, 2012), retrieved February 24, 2023, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233988104\\_The\\_Danish\\_Muhammad\\_Cartoon\\_Conflict](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233988104_The_Danish_Muhammad_Cartoon_Conflict)
26. Andreas Wind, "Efter et halvt års stilstand: Regeringen indkalder til forhandlinger om undervisning i Muhammedkrisen", *Altinget.dk*, (August 22, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.alinget.dk/artikel/efter-et-halvt-aars-stilstand-regeringen-indkalder-til-forhandlinger-om-undervisning-i-muhammedkrisen>
27. Iman Hassani, "Danmarks kulturmoder med Mellemøsten – fra vikingetiden til krigen mod terror", *frydenlund.dk*, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://frydenlund.dk/ungdomsuddannelserne/historie-og-religion/danmarks-kulturmoder-med-mellemosten-7000>
28. Mette Frederiksen, *instagram.com*, (August 14, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.instagram.com/p/ChP8xIINxe5/> (own translation)
29. Nima Zamani, "Omstridt lærebog om mellemøstlig kultur forvrænger virkeligheden: 'Bør for alt i verden ikke indgå i skolernes undervisning'", *altinget.dk*, (August 16, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.alinget.dk/artikel/omstridt-laerebog-om-mellemoestlig-kultur-forvrænger-virkeligheden-boer-for-alt-i-verden-ikke-indga-i-skolernes-undervisning/> Bent Blüdnikow, "Kulturkampen i skolerne er i fuld gang - ny undervisningsbog viser, hvordan eleverne indoktrineres", *berlingske.dk*, (August 6, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/litteratur/kulturkampen-i-skolerne-er-i-fuld-gang-ny-undervisningsbog-viser/> Thomas Hoffmann in Deadline, (August 20, 2022), *facebook.com*, (August 21, 2022),

One of the prevalent debates in 2022 revolved around a commission whose members were selected by the government to bring forth recommendations on “how we in Denmark can ensure minority women the same rights and freedom as other Danish women.”<sup>30</sup> In late August, the “Commission for the Forgotten Women’s Struggle” recommended a hijab ban in elementary schools, including Muslim schools.<sup>31</sup> According to Christina Krzyzosiak Hansen, chairman of the commission and social democratic mayor of Holbæk Municipality, the hijab divides children and shows that Muslim girls are different from Danish girls. With the ban the commission wanted to “ensure that the girls, who do not have the same freedoms as the rest of us, obtain them.”<sup>32</sup>

The hijab ban was one of the commission’s nine recommendations. The other recommendations included, among others, a contingency plan against “honor-related social control,” including an increased awareness on the matter in daycare centers and primary schools; better use of health visitors’ access to ethnic minority families; courses on modern Danish child rearing; increasing sex education in primary school; and strengthening the control of Muslim private schools.<sup>33</sup> Even though all recommendations were problematic, the ban on the hijab was the one recommendation that sparked the most criticism from young Muslim girls who wear the hijab,<sup>34</sup> the Danish Union of Teachers,<sup>35</sup> researchers,<sup>36</sup> and the public in general.<sup>37</sup> A survey by the analysis institute Voxmeter, carried out for the media bureau Ritzau, showed that 56.1 % of the public voted against a hijab ban, 28.2 % voted for a ban, and 15.7 % was undecided.<sup>38</sup>

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- retrieved January 25, 2023, from, <https://www.facebook.com/DR2Deadline/videos/776715023472369>
30. Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp, “Om Kommissionen”, *denglemtekvindekamp.dk*, retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://denglemtekvindekamp.dk/om-kommissionen/>
  31. Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp, “Delanbefalinger om børneliv”, *denglemtekvindekamp.dk*, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://denglemtekvindekamp.dk/kommissionens-anbefalinger/delanbefalinger-om-borneliv/>
  32. Mette Viktoria Pabst Andersen, “Kommission anbefaler at forbyde tørklæder i skolen”, *dr.dk*, (August 24, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/kommission-anbefaler-forbyde-toerklader-i-skolen> (own translation)
  33. Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp, “Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp offentliggør deres første anbefalinger”, *denglemtekvindekamp.dk*, (August 24, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://denglemtekvindekamp.dk/nyheder/2022/august/kommissionen-for-den-glemte-kvindekamp-offentliggør-deres-første-anbefalinger/>
  34. Berfin Erdem, “14-årig skoleelev: Uden tørklædet vil »mit selvværd være helt nede»”, *politiken.dk*, (October 25, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg\\_2022/art8985785/Uden-t%C3%B8rkl%C3%A6det-vil-%C2%BBmit-selvv%C3%A6rd-v%C3%A6re-helt-nede%C2%AB?utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Facebook#Echobox=1666861597](https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg_2022/art8985785/Uden-t%C3%B8rkl%C3%A6det-vil-%C2%BBmit-selvv%C3%A6rd-v%C3%A6re-helt-nede%C2%AB?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1666861597)
  35. Jesper Knudsen, “Danmark Lærereforening: Stort ’nej tak’ til tørklædeforbud”, *folkeskolen.dk*, (August 25, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.folkeskolen.dk/indskoling-mellemtrin-tosprogede/danmark-laererforening-stort-nej-tak-til-toerklædeforbud/4671615>
  36. Peter Sinbeck, “Ekspert dumper regeringens kvindekampskommission – anbefalinger er ”dovne” og ”uden belæg””, *tv2.dk*, (August 26, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2022-08-26-eksperter-dumper-regeringens-kvindekampskommission-anbefalinger-er-dovne-og-uden>
  37. ”Måling: Flertal siger nej til tørklædeforbud i skoler”, *kristeligt-dagblad.dk*, (September 1, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/maaling-flertal-siger-nej-til-toerklædeforbud-i-skoler>
  38. Ibid.

The commission was criticized for not having spoken to any schools, any political party besides the Social Democrats, and for releasing their recommendations only eight months after the commission was established and before their final report was written.<sup>39</sup> It was later revealed through text messages and hidden documents that the head of the commission had both shared and discussed the recommendations with prime minister Frederiksen prior to their release, thus putting into question whether the whole effort was a political endeavor by the former government.<sup>40</sup>

Another ongoing topic is the closing of Muslim schools. The Social Democrats continue to state that they want to close the schools, despite being criticized for transgressing human rights conventions. Closing Muslim schools was also deemed unconstitutional by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice;<sup>41</sup> however the Ministry of Justice has since reversed its verdict on the matter.<sup>42</sup> As to its legal aspect, the former minister of children and education, Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil, insists that it is possible to close the schools, claiming, “It depends on how you put it together. We will present a model that will not be rejected.”<sup>43</sup> In 2022, the prime minister entered an agreement with the Local Government Denmark (Kommunernes Landsforening) that the municipalities must handle the distribution of students from the Muslim schools, when they are closed. According to news outlet BT, this indicates that the government might in fact be preparing to close the schools.<sup>44</sup> According to Rosenkrantz-Theil, “It will be incredibly unsatisfying if we get to June 2023 without anything having happened.”<sup>45</sup>

39. ”Sekretariat bekræfter: Kommission talte ikke med skoleledere før anbefaling om tørklædeforbud”, *politiken.dk*, (September 14, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://politiken.dk/indland/uddannelse/art8976761/Kommission-talte-ikke-med-skoleledere-f%C3%B8r-anbefaling-om-t%C3%B8rkl%C3%A6deforbud>

40. Mie Louise Raatz & Christian Birk, “Statsministerens sms’er blotlægger tætte bånd mellem S og omstridt kommission. »Jeg har aldrig hørt om det før«”, *berlingske.dk*, (October 1, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/danmark/statsministerens-smser-blotlaegger-taette-baand-mellem-s-og-omstridt?referrer=RSS>

Mie Louise Raatz & Christian Birk, “Tørklædekommission taget i at skjule central passage fra kontroversiel debat: »Det er helt forrykt«”, *berlingske.dk*, (October 1, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/toerklaedekommission-taget-i-at-skjule-central-passage-fra-kontroversiel>

41. Jacob Mchangama, “Kan man både forsvare muslimske friskoler og mene, at flere af dem bør lukkes? Ja da”, *zetland.dk*, (September 6, 2017), retrieved February 10, 2023, from <https://www.zetland.dk/historie/s81EK-5pP-aevmJ36a-ed96f>

42. Naja Dandanel “Friskoler og privatskoler: Uforståeligt, at Justitsministeriet pludselig ændrer holdning til muslimske friskoler”, *skolemonitor.dk*, (October 2, 2020), retrieved February 23, 2023, from <https://skolemonitor.dk/nyheder/art7948307/Uforst%C3%A5eligt-at-Justitsministeriet-pludselig-%C3%A6ndrer-holdning-til-muslimske-friskoler>

43. Jacob Friberg, “Mette F. vil lukke muslimske friskoler: Eleverne skal fordeles på folkeskoler”, *bt.dk*, (September 17, 2022), retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://www.bt.dk/politik/mette-f-vil-lukke-muslimske-friskoler-eleverne-skal-fordeles-paa-folkeskoler>

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid. (own translation)



## Politics

In March 2022, Rashed Bin Saad Alolaimi was the first and only person to be put on the new prohibition list (*forbudsliste*).<sup>46</sup> The list is intended to prevent people or organizations that “oppose democracy and freedoms from donating to recipients in Denmark.”<sup>47</sup> Alolaimi also appears on the list of religious preachers banned from entering Denmark and any other Schengen country. The list of religious preachers only includes Muslim preachers, including Kamal El Mekki, Ismail Menk, Haitham al-Haddad, and Abu Eesa Niamatullah.<sup>48</sup> Colloquially, the list is known as the “hate-preacher list” (*hadprædikantlisten*). Only one non-Muslim, pastor Terry Jones, who has made hostile remarks about homosexuality, has ever been on the list.

In November 2022, Denmark held its national elections. Mette Frederiksen from the Social Democrats was re-elected as prime minister, and formed a new majority cross-party government with the Moderates and the Liberal Party of Denmark.<sup>49</sup> Among the far-right parties, a new party, the Denmark Democrats, won 14 mandates, the New Right gained two new mandates, making it a total of six mandates, while the Danish People’s Party had a historically poor election where it lost 11 mandates, retaining only five. In the opposite wing, the relatively new party Independent Greens, which describes itself as an anti-racist party, did not make it into parliament. The Red-Green Alliance, a left-wing party which has also spoken up against racism, lost four mandates, leaving them with nine.<sup>50</sup>

Compared to previous elections, there was less focus on Muslims and immigrants in the political discourse during the 2022 elections. On the contrary, more parties expressed their willingness to re-evaluate and ease some of the immigration laws that have gone too far especially for immigrants in employment.<sup>51</sup> The main argument is that they now have control over the “influx” of immigrants, and that they all agree

46. “Mand fra Kuwait må ikke give stor donation til danske moskéer”, *kristeligt-dagblad.dk*, (March 23, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/mand-fra-kuwait-maa-ikke-give-stor-donation-til-danske-moskeer>

47. Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, “Første person optaget på forbudsliste for antidemokratiske donatorer”, *uim.dk*, (March 23, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://uim.dk/nyhedsarkiv/2022/marts/foerste-person-optaget-paa-forbudsliste-for-antidemokratiske-donatorer/> (own translation)

48. Ny i Danmark, “Religiøse forkyndere med indrejseforbud”, *nyidanmark.dk*, (December 21, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/da/Ord-og-begreber/US/Religi%C3%B8se-forkyndere/Religi%C3%B8se-forkyndere-med-indrejseforbud/?anchor=7C5D2D143D284E4EB-2829BA5F0F04837&callbackItem=C0848E0180C34017BFB14DC9BC116572&callbackAnchor=608D-F21DB20C40B68646A6B6804E595D7C5D2D143D284E4EB2829BA5F0F04837>

49. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, “Denmark has received a new Government”, (December 12, 2022), retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://estland.um.dk/en/news/denmark-has-received-a-new-government>

50. DR, “Valgresultater”, *dr.dk* (November 4, 2022), retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/folketingsvalg/resultater>

51. Anders Bæksgaard, “Er vi vidne til et nyt paradigmeskifte i dansk udlændingepolitik?”, *politiken.dk*, (October 16, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg\\_2022/art9031055/Er-vi-vidne-til-et-nyt-paradigmeskifte-i-dansk-udl%C3%A6ndingepolitik](https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg_2022/art9031055/Er-vi-vidne-til-et-nyt-paradigmeskifte-i-dansk-udl%C3%A6ndingepolitik)

on the importance of a hard line, which gives them space to now look at how the legislation is also affecting a group of people who were not the main target, e.g., those who work in fields that are in dire need of labor force.<sup>52</sup>

## Media

In 2022, the Responsible Press (*Ansvarlig Presse*) launched their newest report titled “Those we (still) talk about” (*Dem vi (stadig) taler om*) on media representation.<sup>53</sup> Among their main conclusions was that while immigrants and their descendants, according to Statistics Denmark, make up 14% of Denmark’s population in 2021, they only make up 3.5% of news sources. This is a decline from their previous survey in 2017, when minority citizens made up 12.3% of the population but 4% of the news sources. The report also reveals that minority women are twice as underrepresented, and that minority sources appear in news reserves on topics that have to do with integration, foreigners, and crime. However, although they appear in these discussions, they only make up about 20% of the sources, the rest are mainly white Danish politicians, making the topics highly politicized. When minority sources are used, they are predominantly used as sources of experience and not sources of expertise. Last, but not least, the survey reveals that less than 1% of the 1,244 news items that were part of the survey was penned by a journalist with a minority background.<sup>54</sup>

In January 2022, Denmark’s first Muslim-led radio program broadcasted on a mainstream, national radio station, was launched. *Det Muslimer Taler Om* (What Muslims Talk About) is hosted by journalists Elias Ramadan and Zainab Nasrati, and edited by Omar Alkhatib, all of whom identify as practicing Muslims and is part of the radio station 24syv. The radio program describes itself as tackling issues that are important to Muslims,<sup>55</sup> and quickly became popular. By the end of the year, it had approximately 1,500 podcast listeners a week, making it one of the most listened to among the radio stations’ programs according to Alkhatib.<sup>56</sup> The Muslim-led program did not go unnoticed, and during 2022, there were accusations that a known Danish mosque was running the show.<sup>57</sup> Alkhatib, Nasrati, and Ramadan denied the allegations, problematizing the guilt-by-association approach and the general suspi-

52. Ibid.

53. Hanne Jørndrup 2022, *Dem vi (stadig) taler om: Etniske minoriteter i danske nyhedsmedier*, Roskilde Universitet, Roskilde, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://ansvarligpresse.dk/onewebmedia/Dem%20Vi%20Stadig%20Taler%20Om%202022.pdf>

54. Ibid.

55. 24syv, “Det, Muslimer Taler Om”, *24syv.dk*, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://24syv.dk/podcast/det-muslimertaler-om>

56. Omar Alkhatib, *facebook.com*, (January 4, 2023), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10226634663465730&set=a.2958769681255>

57. Eva Gregersen, “Islamisk Trossamfund har fået sit eget statsstøttede radioprogram på 24syv”, *berlingske.dk*, (August 26, 2022), retrieved January 25, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentatorer/islamisk-trossamfund-har-faet-sit-eget-statsstottede-radioprogram-pa>



cion towards Muslims.<sup>58</sup> In another op-ed, Ramadan described how he, as a Muslim journalist, has been subject to negative questioning throughout his career.<sup>59</sup>

In December 2022, the Danish host Christian Høgh Andersen (not the man portrayed in Fig. 2, but a journalist off-screen) compared the Moroccan national team, who celebrated their victories with their mothers, with a wildlife photo of a monkey family on national TV. The comment was made as they jumped from one subject to another, which prompted another host to ask Andersen, “I am curious as to how you will land that one with Qatar and those monkeys,” to which Andersen answered, “Because they kind of stick together, and that is also what you do in family reunification in Qatar, [and] in Morocco of course.”<sup>60</sup> The incident went viral both nationally<sup>61</sup> and internationally.<sup>62</sup>



**Figure 2:** Screenshot from “Deltidsaraber” Instagram profile where a comparison is being drawn on Danish national TV between the Moroccan national team, who celebrated their victories with their mothers, and a family of monkeys.<sup>63</sup>

58. Zainab Nasrati, Elias Ramadan, Omar Alkhatib, ”Klummeskribent manipulerer groft: Det Islamiske Trossamfund har ikke et radioprogram hos 24syv”, *berlingske.dk*, (August 26, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentarer/klummeskribent-manipulerer-groft-det-islamiske-trossamfund-har-ikke-et>
59. Elias Ramadan, ”Journalist: Der gælder særlige regler for muslimske journalister”, *politiken.dk*, (September 10, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art8959279/Journalist-Der-g%C3%A6lder-s%C3%A6rlige-regler-for-muslimske-journalister>
60. (own translation)
61. Charlotte Branner, ”TV 2-vært beskyldes for racisme i bedste sendetid. Nu undskylder tv-stationen”, *politiken.dk*, (December 22, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://politiken.dk/kultur/medier/art9130322/TV-2-v%C3%A6rt-beskyldes-for-racisme-i-bedste-sendetid.-Nu-undskylder-tv-stationen>
62. Al Jazeera English, ”Danish TV compares monkeys to Moroccan footballers and their mothers | AJ #shorts”, *youtube.com*, (December 17, 2022), retrieved February 23, 2023, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZH-hJS9khdI&ab\\_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZH-hJS9khdI&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish)
63. Deltidsaraber, *instagram.com*, (December 16, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.instagram.com/p/CmPALcMMvj-/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>

The TV host later said that it was a “poor attempt to be humorous” and “unintentional.” In a Facebook post he offered an “unreserved apology” as what he said “could be perceived” as a racist comment, which in no way was his intention.<sup>64</sup> The TV station, TV2, also gave a “profound apology” for what “could be perceived as a racist comment.”<sup>65</sup>

## Justice system

Justitia, a legal think tank, stated in their annual report that even though Denmark has a high ranking in international measures on the protection of civil rights and the rule of law, there are more and more examples of citizens whose legal certainty and rights are deteriorating.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most talked about cases in 2022, was the case of Ahmad Samsam. Samsam is a young man, who, during a vacation in Spain in 2017, was arrested and given a terrorism sentence of eight years in prison for joining the “Islamic State” on three trips to Syria. He claims that he joined rebel forces (not ISIS) in Syria as an undercover agent for the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) and later for the Danish Defence Intelligence Service (FE).<sup>67</sup> According to the news outlet Berlingske, leaked documents revealed that Samsam was an agent; that the efforts to assist Samsam were “inadequate”; and that the two Danish services were reluctant and slow to seek the assistance of the Spanish intelligence service.<sup>68</sup> After three and a half years in several Spanish prisons, Samsam was transferred to serve his remaining time in Denmark, where he remains incarcerated.<sup>69</sup>

During the national election in November 2022, several political parties, including the Moderates and the Liberal Party of Denmark who are now part of the government, were vocal about Samsam’s case, saying they wanted his case investigated by a commission.<sup>70</sup> After the elections, however, the new minister of justice stated that

64. Christian Høgh Andersen, *facebook.com*, (December 17, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.facebook.com/christianoitaliano/posts/10225084265707168> (own translation)

65. TV2 Communications, “TV 2 apologizes for inappropriate and offensive comment from a host of TV 2 NEWS”, *omtv2.tv2.dk*, (December 17, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://omtv2.tv2.dk/nyheder/2022/12/tv-2-apologizes-for-inappropriate-and-offensive-comment-from-a-host-of-tv-2-news/>

66. Justitia, “Statusrapport: Retssikkerhed 2022”, *report*, justitia-int.org, retrieved February 1, 2023, from [https://justitia-int.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Statusrapport\\_retssikkerhed-2022.pdf](https://justitia-int.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Statusrapport_retssikkerhed-2022.pdf)

67. Frederik Hagemann-Nielsen & Louise Dalsgaard, “Fra sin fængselscelle forsøger Ahmed Samsam at få renset sit navn: ‘Det er et mareridt, der ikke vil ende’”, *dr.dk*, (May 8, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/fra-sin-faengselscelle-forsoger-ahmed-samsam-faa-renset-sit-navn-det-er-et-mareridt>

68. Simon Andersen & Jens Anton Bjørnager, “Nyt læk: PET erkender alvorligt svigt i sag om fængslet spion”, *berlingske.dk*, (June 27, 2021), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/nyt-laek-pet-erkender-alvorligt-svigt-i-sag-om-faengslet-spion>

69. (Ibid.)

70. Louise Dalsgaard & Emil Eller, “Flertal vil have Ahmed Samsam-sag undersøgt i kommission”, *dr.dk*, (October 19, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/flertal-vil-have-ahmed-samsam-sag-undersoegt-i-kommission>

Samsam's case will not be subject to an investigation by a commission regarding the FE, claiming that the government had found no reason to set up a commission to investigate the case.<sup>71</sup> Samsam is suing the PET and FE to have them acknowledge that he cooperated with them and to clear his name.<sup>72</sup> In December 2022, Samsam announced that he has gone on a hunger strike.<sup>73</sup>

Another case of possible miscarriage of justice was brought forward in June 2022 in the award-winning podcast "The Living Proof" by journalist Frederik Hugo Ledegaard from the DR.<sup>74</sup> The podcast tells the story of a Muslim Danish-Somali family, who after a summer vacation in Kenya in 2015 were accused of female genital mutilation (FGM) of their daughters. The suspicion was brought forward by the youngest daughter's schoolteacher, who thought the child appeared gloomy and sad after the summer vacation. The District Court, the High Court, and the Supreme Court with a testimonial from the Council of Forensic Medicine, established that the two sisters had been circumcised. The parents were found guilty and they have since served their sentenced of 1.5 years in prison. Nevertheless, the family have insisted on their innocence from the beginning of the case and the daughters are still fighting to clear their parents' name. The daughters have been examined by several gynecologists, including some of the leading experts on FGM in and outside of Denmark, who have all stipulated that the girls had *not* been victims of FGM, despite what the forensic investigators claimed.<sup>75</sup> When the family requested the Court of Appeal to reopen their criminal proceedings, the court asked the Council of Forensic Medicine to reassess the new evidence brought to the case. The council then asked the same forensic investigators if they, considering the new expert assessment, would change their conclusion, which they refused to do. Consequently, the Court of Appeal refused to reopen the case.<sup>76</sup> Several experts have raised concerns regarding the case's lack of due process.<sup>77</sup>

71. Carsten Thomsen, "Ny justitsminister afviser at undersøge Ahmed Samsam-sagen", *dr.dk*, (December 15, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/seneste/ny-justitsminister-afviser-under-soege-ahmed-samsam-sagen>
72. Louise Dalsgaard et al, "Dokumenter bekræfter hemmelige forhandlinger med efterretningstjenester i Samsam-sag", *dr.dk*, (December 22, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/dokumenter-bekraeft-hemmelige-forhandlinger-med-efterretningstjenester-i-samsam>
73. Louise Dalsgaard & Frederik Hagemann-Nielsen, "Fængsel bekræfter: Terrordømte Ahmed Samsam er gået i sultestrejke", *dr.dk*, (December 9, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/faengsel-bekraeft-terrordømte-ahmed-samsam-er-gaaet-i-sultestrejke>
74. DR, "Det Levende Bevis", (June 17 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/lyd/p1/det-levende-bevis>
75. Frederik Hugo Ledegaard & Anne Skjerning, "Forældre fængslet for at omskære døtre: De er ikke omskåret, siger førende ekspert", *dr.dk*, (December 13, 2018), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/foraelde-faengslet-omskae-re-doe-re-ikke-omskaaet-siger-foerende-ekspert>
76. Frederik Hugo Ledegaard et al, "Forældre blev dømt for omskæringer: Da der opstod tvivl, blev de samme læger sat til at genvurdere sagen", *dr.dk*, (June 20, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/foraelde-blev-dømt-omskæringer-da-der-opstod-tvivl-blev-de-samme-læger-sat-til>
77. Frederik Hugo Ledegaard et al, "Nye oplysninger i sag om omskæring: 'Meget stor sandsynlighed for, at der er sket et justitsmord'", *dr.dk*, (June 19, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/nye-oplysninger-i-sag-om-omskæring-meget-stor-sandsynlighed-der-er-sket-et>

What is important to note is that this case cannot be viewed apart from the prejudice that has been directed at Muslim families during the last two decades; namely, the political climate and the political campaigning that have been focused on, what the government has named, “negative social control” (NSC) and “honor-related conflicts” (HRC). With these sorts of campaigns, teachers and other professionals are being instructed to associate NSC and HRC with Muslim families and Muslim culture, and to pay close attention to Muslim children in regards to different risk factors. Some of the instructions include being particularly attentive to girls with an African background, who have recently been on trips to an African country, because of the fear of FGM.<sup>78</sup> Other risk factors include being a child of refugee parents and being a child from “closed, religious environments.”<sup>79</sup> As such, we are concerned, that these political campaigns can lead to Muslim children and families being discriminated against in schools based on prejudice against their culture and religious beliefs and values. In 2022, the government set aside funds in the Finance Act to further educate teachers in recognizing and preventing “negative social control” and “honor-related conflicts” for the period 2022-2024.<sup>80</sup>

In November 2022, the residents of Mjølnerparken, Nørrebro, had their case referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The residents are seeking a ruling from the CJEU on the correct interpretation of the EU’s Race Equality Directive, and in regards to the use of the term “non-Western.” The group of residents are being evicted from their homes in Mjølnerparken because their housing area was categorized by the government as a “regeneration area” (formerly known as a “tough ghetto”) under the “parallel society” legislation (formerly known as the “ghetto-policy.”) The determining factor for a common housing area to be labelled as a “regeneration area” is that more than half of the residents are of “non-Western” background, a term that is politically constructed and often used synonymously with Muslims.<sup>81</sup>

## Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

Just before the 2022 national election, a new party, the Denmark Democrats, was formed. The party leader is Inger Støjberg, the former minister of immigration and

78. Etnisk Konsulentteam, “Kvindelig kønslemlæstelse”, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://etniskkonsulentteam.kk.dk/om-etnisk-konsulentteam/aeresrelaterede-problemfelter/kvindelig-koenslemlaestelse> - this is an example from the Municipality of Copenhagen, but the same discourse applies nationwide.

79. Region Syddanmark, “Underretning ved mistanke om børn og unges forhold”, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://regionsyddanmark.dk/fagfolk/der-naere-sundhedsvaesen/samarbejdsaftaler/born-og-unge/underretning-ved-mistanke-om-born-og-unges-forhold#ndt4uw>

80. Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, “Nyt diplommodul ruste lærere og pædagoger til at forhindre negativ social kontrol og aeresrelaterede konflikter”, *uim.dk*, (April 30, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.uim.dk/nyhedsarkiv/2022/april/nyt-diplommodul-ruster-laerere-og-paedagoger-til-at-forhindre-negativ-social-kontrol-og-aeresrelaterede-konflikter/>

81. Open Society Justice Initiative, “Discrimination Case Challenging Danish “Ghetto Package” Eviction Plan Referred to Court of Justice of the European Union”, *justiceinitiative.org*, (November 7, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/newsroom/discrimination-case-challenging-danish-ghetto-package-eviction-plan-referred-to-court-of-justice-of-the-european-union>

integration from the Liberal Party of Denmark.<sup>82</sup> Støjberg is known for her Islamophobic statements and politics, which include being the main person behind a law that led to seizing assets that exceed a certain amount from asylum seekers,<sup>83</sup> and for celebrating tougher immigration laws with cake.<sup>84</sup> She is also known for being convicted of breaching the Ministerial Accountability Act, for which she was sentenced to 60 days in prison, after illegally separating young Syrian married asylum-seekers.<sup>85</sup> As a consequence, Støjberg was kicked out of parliament. Ten months after, she was back with her just 4-month-old party. The Denmark Democrats won 14 mandates in the election, and is now the fifth-largest party in the Danish Parliament.<sup>86</sup>

## Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

In 2022, two action plans were in the making: a Local Action Plan against racism, ethnic discrimination, and hate crimes by the municipality of Copenhagen, and a National Action Plan against racism. Several Muslim CSOs were invited to contribute, including the Centre for Muslims' Rights in Denmark (CEDA).

The debate on the hijab ban prompted a lot of new contributors to the public scene. One of them was midwife Lamia Ibnhsain who with a one-day notice managed to summon thousands to the demonstration "Hands off women's hijab."<sup>87</sup> Ibnhsain was vocal both on social media and in several media outlets, advocating for Muslim women's rights, encouraging young Muslim women to be proud of their identity, and to speak up against Islamophobia. The Instagram profile "Deltidsaraber"<sup>88</sup> (Part-time Arab), which has a following of approximately 29,000, has also had great success in spreading awareness about Islamophobia and racism on social media. In 2022, "Deltidsaraber" was nominated as "Role Model of the Year" by the radio station The Voice.<sup>89</sup>

82. For more information: Amani Hassani: *Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2021*, in: Enes Bayrakli & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2021*, Vienna: Leopold Weiss institute, 2022.

83. Folketinget, "L 87 Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven.", *www.ft.dk*, retrieved on February 24, 2023, from <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/lovforslag/L87/44/afstemninger.htm>

84. Lucy Pasha-Robinson, "Danish minister sparks furious backlash after celebrating tougher immigration laws with cake", *independent.co.uk*, (March 16, 2017), retrieved February 24, 2023, from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/danish-integration-minister-inger-stoeborg-furious-backlash-celebrating-tougher-immigration-laws-cake-facebook-a7632161.html>

85. Rigsretten, "Rigsretten har afsagt dom i sagen mod fhv. minister Inger Støjberg", *rigsretten.dk*, (December 13, 2021), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://rigsretten.dk/aktuelt/2021/12/rigsretten-har-afsagt-dom-i-sagen-mod-fhv-minister-inger-stoeborg/>

86. Frank Hvilsom et al, "Danmarksdemokraterne bliver næststørst i Nordjylland", (November 1, 2022), retrieved February 1, 2023, from [https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg\\_2022/art9060233/Danmarksdemokraterne-bliver-n%C3%A6stst%C3%B8rst-i-Nordjylland](https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/folketingsvalg_2022/art9060233/Danmarksdemokraterne-bliver-n%C3%A6stst%C3%B8rst-i-Nordjylland)

87. Kærlighedsmarch, for kvinders ret til hijab, "Nallerne væk fra kvinders HIJAB", *facebook.com*, (August 26, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.facebook.com/events/den-r%C3%B8de-plads-2200-k%C3%B8benhavn-n-danmark/nallerne-v%C3%A6k-fra-kvinders-hijab/1331015760638881/>

88. Deltidsaraber, *Instagram.com*, retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://www.instagram.com/deltidsaraber/?hl=da>

89. The Voice, "Årets Forbillede", *radioplay.dk*, (October 10, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://radioplay.dk/the-voice/the-voice/awards/arets-forbillede-2/>

In general, 2022 was also marked by new and strengthened coalitions amongst anti-racist, anti-Islamophobia, and climate activist groups. Together they hosted a joint demonstration against the “ghetto law,”<sup>90</sup> arguing that besides being racist and Islamophobic, it is bad for our environment.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In 2022, the juridical system was under scrutiny, especially regarding the case of Ahmad Samsam. Samsam's case received a lot of media attention and was also used during the elections in several parties' electoral campaigns. This was partly because there are other ongoing public controversies around the Danish Defence Intelligence Service.

The case of the two Danish-Somali girls did not receive as much attention before the journalist, who did the investigative podcast, won Denmark's most prestigious journalist award, the Cavling Prize, half a year later. After the ceremony, the public and politicians began taking notice of the case. However, while the discussion mainly revolved around the juridical system, not much was said about the political structures that allowed for such an incident to unfold. Nor is there much talk about how the political discourse and former governments for years have laid the groundwork for such racialized views on Muslim families, and, in this case, Somali families, by pushing "negative social control" campaigns. Moreover, with the threatening of teachers and other professionals with legal consequences for lack of referrals when suspecting "negative social control," we are concerned about the possibility of more unnecessary, biased referrals of Muslim families. As such we recommend that the government should implement the following suggestions:

- Recognize Islamophobia as a type of racism that targets, affects, and discriminates against Muslims, and those perceived to be Muslim, and in effect limits their social, economic, and cultural rights.
- Recognize that there is structural racism in Denmark, and identify both conscious and unconscious biases, norms, legislation, routines, attitudes, and behaviors that discriminate against Muslims.
- Withdraw the “parallel society” policy (formerly known as the “ghetto policy”) and secure equal access for all citizens to affordable rental housing, including for non-EU/EEA citizens.

90. "Klimaaktivister gik på gaden mod ghettolovens nedrivninger af boliger," *Arbejderen.dk*, (December 6, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from <https://arbejderen.dk/indland/klimaaktivister-gik-paa-gaden-mod-ghettolovens-nedrivninger-af-boliger/>

91. "Demo: klimakrisen raser – Stop ghetto-loven og nedrivninger", *facebook.com*, (December 1, 2022), retrieved January 25, 2023, from [https://m.facebook.com/events/650021143331148/?ref\\_source=newsfeed&ref\\_mechanism=feed\\_attachment&action\\_context=%257B%2522action\\_history%2522%253A%2522null%2522%252D](https://m.facebook.com/events/650021143331148/?ref_source=newsfeed&ref_mechanism=feed_attachment&action_context=%257B%2522action_history%2522%253A%2522null%2522%252D)

- Ease the requirements for permanent residence permit and Danish citizenship, and reintroduce naturalization for all foreign nationals born and raised in Denmark.
- Reintroduce exemption from the citizenship test for people with physical and mental disorders.

## Chronology

- **13.01.2022:** The Equal Treatment Board ruled it as indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion that two Muslim female students had their internship suspended.
- **27.01.2022:** The government formed a commission titled “The Commission for the Forgotten Women’s Struggle” that aimed at investigating how to avoid “negative social control of women and girls with an immigrant background.”
- **23.03.2022:** Rashed Bin Saad Alolaimi was put on the newly established prohibition list (*forbudsliste*).
- **24.08.2022:** The “Commission for the Forgotten Women’s Struggle” recommended a hijab ban in elementary schools.
- **30.04.2022:** The government announced a new diploma module to retrain teachers and on “negative social control” and “honor-related conflicts.”
- **01.11.2022:** Denmark held its national election, where Mette Frederiksen from the Social Democrats was re-elected as prime minister.
- **07.11.2022:** The residents of Mjølnerparken, Nørrebro, got their case referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) seeking a ruling on the correct interpretation of the EU’s Race Equality Directive, and in regards to the use of the term “non-Western.”
- **08.11.2022:** A 15-year-old boy was charged with far-right terrorism.