Online Hate Prevention Institute

ONLINE HATE TASK FORCE

Online Anti-Muslim Hate and Racism Against Palestinians and Arabs
October 2023 - February 2024

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Content Warning and Support Services

The content in this report may cause distress for some readers. If you find yourself distressed, we encourage you to discontinue reading and seek support.In Australia there are a range of support services you can approach. Here are a few you may wish to consider approaching if you need support.

Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing anyone in Australia and experiencing emotional distress with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Support is available:

- By phone, call **13 11 14** and speak to a trained Crisis Supporter any time of the day or night (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- By text message, send a text to **0477 13 11 14** and receive support from a Crisis Supporter by text message any time of the day or night (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- By online chat, if you prefer to type rather than talk, you can message with a Crisis Supporter though the Lifeline website https://www.lifeline.org.au/ at any time of the day or night (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline provides support to those under the age of 25 and in Australia. Support is available:

- By phone, call **1800 551 800**. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- By email, **counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au** – emails are checked 8am -10pm daily.
- By online chat, if you prefer to type rather than talk, you can connect with a counsellor through the Kids Helpline website at https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling/

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Beyond Blue is an Australian mental health organisation focused on supporting people affected by anxiety, depression and suicide. Support is available:

- By phone, call **1300 22 46 35** and speak to a qualified mental health line counsellor any time of the day or night (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- By online chat, if you prefer to type rather than talk, you can message with a qualified mental health line counsellor any time of the day or night (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) at https://www.beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat

Statements of support for this report

Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, University of Technology Sydney:
"OHPI has used a methodologically sophisticated yet manageable data collection approach to map the ecology of online hate against Arabs, Muslims and Palestinians. In a situation fraught with fear, anger and hate, the study has demonstrated how powerful on-line engagement can be in promoting dehumanisation of the "Other".   The three most significant platforms in the study, X, Gab and Telegram, are the least likely to be moderated, demonstrating the complicity of the platform owners in the promulgation of opportunities to disseminate hate. The report is based on strong evidence, carefully analysed, and presented with nuance and insight. It increases awareness not only of the harm being propagated, but also how that harm is experienced. Most importantly it looks to ways that would allow platforms, communities and governments to restrain the harmful behaviour, within the broad consensus on freedom of speech and its balance against freedom from hate."

Dr James Gomez, Regional Director, Asia Centre:
"Both anti-Semitic rhetoric, which OHPI through The Moment Project assessed previously, and anti-Muslim rhetoric that is the focus of this report, is part of a rising trend of hatred globally that sees particular prominence whenever conflict arises. Looking at this issue from the Asia-Pacific region, we at Asia Centre have also noticed a spike in online hate in reaction to the latest round of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This report captures well the ways in which hatred, whether direct or indirect, is flamed through social media. In the report "Hate Speech in Southeast Asia: New Forms, Old Rules" (2020), Asia Centre came to a similar conclusion: that the virality of hatred on social media remains poorly managed. I therefore appreciate this report's recommendations directed at social media platforms, as well as other stakeholders, to use their influence positively to mitigate hatred online."

Dr. Abbee Corb, Simon Wiesenthal Center:
"Another great, overarching, and well-written report by OHPI. Thought-provoking, well-stated and provocative. Users who are ill-informed, academics and practitioners who are not well-versed on the topic will garner a great deal of understanding."

Rosie Thomas OAM, Executive Director, PROJECT ROCKIT:
"At PROJECT ROCKIT, we are deeply concerned by the surge in online anti-Muslim hate and antisemitism that has emerged since the onset of the war between Hamas and Israel in October. The Online Hate Prevention Institute's report provides disturbing insights into the scale, nature and impact of anti-Muslim hate, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive strategies and interfaith alliances to counter this growing threat.

As Australia's youth-driven movement against bullying, hate, and prejudice, PROJECT ROCKIT is dedicated to empowering young people to lead the charge against online hate. The report's findings are particularly relevant to our mission, as they highlight the pervasive nature of online hate that young people are encountering daily. We must work together to eliminate this corrosive hate and we call on all social media platforms, governments and civil society to listen and act on these recommendations."

Executive Summary

Since the war between Hamas and Israel began in October there has been a significant surge in both anti-Muslim hate and antisemitism. At the same time, polarisation over events in the Middle East has challenged interfaith alliances built to unite communities. These alliances have in the past played a key role in joint action against hate speech and hate crime targeting both the Muslim and Jewish communities, as well as broader issues of religious vilification and racism. Many have found themselves paralysed.

This report is part of the "Moment Project", a joint project of the Online Hate Prevention Institute based in Australia, which tackles all forms of online hate, and the Online Hate Task Force based in Belgium, which tackles all forms of online religious vilification. The *Moment Project* was started in October 2023 as an emergency response to what our organisations saw as a moment of rising online hate against both Muslims and Jews due to the unfolding events in the Middle East. This report is the second in a series of three reports, with a report on antisemitism already published, and a comparative report looking at both anti-Muslim hate and antisemitism due to be released in the coming months.

The Moment Project collected data in discrete instances of collection, each lasting one hour. It included 320 of these instances of data collection. 160 of these were focused on anti-Muslim hate. This involved 16 instances, spread over three months, on each of 10 social media platforms. Each instance started with a search of a keyword or phrase to find an initial item of anti-Muslim hate. The item was collected, along with anti-Muslim hate comments or replies. After this the users who positively engaged with that content (e.g. likes, shares, or comments) were examined to see what they had posted. Where anti-Muslim hate was found, the process of examining comments or replies, and positively engaging users, was repeated. This snowballing approach allowed data to be identified at some degree of scale using human intelligence rather than AI for identification. Limiting the role of keywords or phrases allowed content to be found and included which artificial intelligence approaches based on words, phrases, or supervised learning models, would often miss. It came with a danger of falling into an echo chamber, addressed by restarting the process 16 times on each platform.

We collected of anti-Muslim hate, anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Arab racism, or a combination of two or more of these types of hate, between 27 October 2023 and 8 February 2024. The data came from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, Telegram, LinkedIn, Gab, Reddit, and BitChute. A location of origin was only identified in 44% of the data, of this, 41% came from Europe or the UK, 34% from North American, 10% from the Middle East, 6% from Asia, 6% from Australia, and 3% from elsewhere (other).

Each item collected was categorised into one or more categories of hate. Nine of the categories relate to specific narratives of anti-Muslim hate, the tenth covers any other forms of anti-Muslim hate, and the 11th category covers anti-Palestinian or anti-Arab racism. The 10 categories of anti-Muslim hate were created in our 2013 work using grounded theory to derive categories from a sample of anti-Muslim hate social media data. The addition of a category for anti-Palestinian racism or anti-Arab racism was a response to the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict's potential impact on the level of hate speech and the possibility of a shift in the language of the hate speech.

The categories we used (with the number of items in this category, and the percent of all items this represents) are as follows:

- **Demonising / dehumanising Muslims (404 items, 35% of all items):** Content that compares Muslims to animals, says or implies Muslims are inferior to other people, presents Muslims as the devil or the devil's agents.
- **Other anti-Muslim hate (404 items, 35% of all items):** Much of this category involves anti-Muslim slurs, some of it involve other specific but far less common anti-Muslim narratives.
- **Muslims as a cultural threat (385 items, 33% of all items):** Content that presents Muslims as "threat to our way of life". It includes content that claims having Muslims in society will lead to the replacement of the Western liberal democratic systems by Sharia law.
- **Muslims as a security risk (331 items, 28% of all items):** Content that presents all Muslims as terrorists, criminals, or otherwise a danger to the safety of society.
- **Xenophobia / anti-refugee (230 items, 20% of all items):** Content that applies xenophobic or anti-refugee sentiments specifically to Muslims. It may among other things: seek to cast doubt on the legitimacy of asylum claims, treat all Muslims as if they are non-citizens, call for Muslims to be prevented entry or expelled.
- **Socially excluding Muslims (158 items, 14% of all items):** Content that may seek to make it more difficult for Muslims to live in society and participate as a part of the broader community. This includes campaigns against Halal food and the creation of mosques.
- **Anti-Muslim jokes (134 items, 11% of all items):** Content presented in the form of a joke, but based on negative generalisations of Muslims, or with messages that seek to exclude Muslims. In general the other themes discussed in this report but in joke form.
- **Inciting anti-Muslim violence (111 items, 9% of all items):** Content that calls for Muslims or Muslim property to be harmed.
- **Racism (against Palestinians or Arabs, 9% of all items) (107 items):** Hate speech that has a clear basis in Palestinian or Arab ethnicity. It may be combined with anti-Muslim hate, or may attack all Palestinians or all Arabs regardless of their religion.
- **Muslims as dishonest (70 items, 6% of all items):** This theme presents dishonestly as an inherent trait of Muslim people, or a religious practice when dealing with non-Muslims.
- **Undermining Muslim allies (15 items, 1% of all items):** This content has two forms. One seeks to undermine efforts to combat anti-Muslim hate, presenting such hate as acceptable, rationale, reasonable etc.. The other directly targets non-Muslim people or organisations because of their work tackling anti-Muslim hate.

Almost all the data we collected involved anti-Muslim hate (99%). This is because of the 9% of the data that was classified as racism against either Palestinians or Arabs, 92% of it also contained elements of anti-Muslim hate. Anti-Palestinian racism or anti-Arab racism without the presence of anti-Muslim hate was very rare.

We also examined the spread of the data between the 10 platforms we examined. As equal time was spent on each platform, a higher number of items means the hate we were looking for was more prevalent and easier to find. We list the platforms, the number items from that platform, and the percent of the total sample this represents. After this we look at the data from that platform and which categories of hate were most prevalent on that particular platform. This is important as the nature of the hate varies by platform, so to be most effective any response (whether removals or counter speech) needs to be tailored to the platform it is addressing. The platform data is as follows:

- **X (Twitter)** (264 items, 23% of all items): 35% of the items present Muslims as a cultural threat, while 31% demonise or dehumanise Muslims.
- **Gab** (159 items, 14% of all items): 49% of the items represented Muslims as a cultural threat, while 39% involved demonisation or dehumanisation.
- **Telegram** (157 items, 13% of all items): 38% of the items demonise or dehumanise Muslims, 34% present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 31% as a security threat. 36% of the content had some element classified as "other".
- **Facebook** (109 items, 9% of all items): 49% present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 39% use demonisation or dehumanisation.
- **BitChute** (96 items, 8% of all items): 47% of the items present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 36% demonise or dehumanise Muslims.
- **Reddit** (91 items, 8% of all items): 32% of the items on Facebook represented Muslims as a cultural threat, while 25% involved demonisation or dehumanisation. 43% involved some element categorised as "other".
- **Instagram** (79 items, 7% of all items): 39% demonise or dehumanise Muslims and 35% present Muslims as a cultural threat.
- **TikTok** (79 items, 7% of all items): 39% use demonisation or dehumanisation, 33% present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 33% as a security threat.
- **YouTube** (68 items, 6% of all items): 50% present Muslims as a cultural threat, 34% demonised or dehumanised Muslims. 34% use Xenophobia / anti-refugee sentiment.
- **LinkedIn** (67 items, 6% of all items): 49% presented Muslims as a security risk, and 45% as a cultural threat.

The overall -prevalence of anti-Muslim hate has increased significantly compared to before October. The Nominal Daily Collection Rate, that is the number of items we would expect to collect in 8 hours of monitoring, was 58. This suggests an increase in the prevalence of anti-Muslim hate of at least 400%, possibly much higher, compared to before October 2023. As shown above, anti-Muslim hate was notably more prevalent on X (Twitter) than on other platforms. There was almost 4 times as much anti-Muslim hate found on X as was found on YouTube, or on LinkedIn. The volume of anti-Muslim hate found on X was far larger even than that found on platforms with a large far-right presence like Gab, Telegram, and BitChube. The role X (Twitter) is playing in the dissemination of anti-Muslim hate is therefore particularly worrying.

An important part of this research was to examine how effective the various platforms are at removing the content we identified. This varies from 54% on BitChute, and 50% on Facebook, to just 15% on YouTube and 19% on Telegram. Overall about a third of the data we collected was removed after four or more months had passed. Clearly more needs to be done to better identify and remove anti-Muslim hate.

The report includes a number of recommendations, which we list here for convenience:

#	Recommendation	Stakeholder	Page
1	Platforms should have a team with enhanced expertise in religious vilification against Muslims. Platform Trust and Safety staff should be able to refer hard cases to that team if uncertain about a complaint. The handling of complaints that users marked as religious vilification against Muslims should be monitored by the platform's experts reviewing a random sample of these complaints and comparing their responses to those of regular reviewers.	Platforms	14
2	Platforms should provide specific transparency reports on religious vilification against Muslims, and reports on other specific forms of hate, rather than generic hate speech reports. Governments may need to regulate to require this to ensure it occurs.	Platforms / Governments	14
3	Platforms should fund audits, like this report, and use them to improve their responses to anti-Muslim hate. To create the best understanding of the problem, such reports should examine data across multiple platforms, not just a company's own platform(s).	Platforms	14
4	Far more investment is needed to maintain work like that carried out for this report on an ongoing basis.	Platforms / Governments	14
5	Platforms should allow users to identify content not only as hate speech, or hate speech based on race or on religion, but specifically as religious vilification against Muslims, racism against Palestinians, or racism against Arabs.	Platforms	14
6	X needs to add proactive, ideally automated, removal of religious vilification against Muslims and other forms of hate speech. This should be a basic expectation for any large platform. Government should require this as part of its basic online safety expectations.	Platforms / Government	17
7	LinkedIn needs to be more proactive in removing online hate in light of changes to the culture of the platform.	Platforms	17
8	Governments that have not already done so need to start preparing for potential regulation of online hate.	Governments	19
9	Enforceable expectations should be set by governments, exist outside of the terms of service of any one company, and should be consistent for different providers with respect to equivalent services.	Governments	19

#	Recommendation	Stakeholder	Page
10	eSafety should be given the ability to level small fines to users who engage in harmful online conduct, with larger fines for repeated or more serious offences where criminal proceedings are not being pursued.	Governments	19
11	Discussion and criticism of religion should be protected on social media under the principle of free speech, so long as it doesn't put practising adherents of a religion at risk of harm or impinge on their right to religious freedom.	Platforms / Government	117
12	Where a country makes it unlawful to communicate content that is so scurrilous, abusive, offensive, or vilifying towards a religion that it may lead to a breach of the peace, social media companies should comply with that law by geo-blocking such content in that legal jurisdiction and any others with equivalent laws.	Platforms	117
13	Those addressing structural Islamophobia should include a focus on social media policies related to anti-Muslim hate and the effectiveness of takedown rates of this content.	Civil Society / Governments	122
14	Where the term Islamophobia is used, a definition should be provided. In countries where criticism of religion is regarded as within free speech, we recommend adopting the APPG Working Definition of Islamophobia.	Civil Society / Platforms / Governments	124
15	The remit of eSafety should be expanded to explicitly include the safety of groups instead of only individuals within society that are impacted by online hate.	Governments	134
16	eSafety should be restructured to add one or more Deputy Commissioners, and related support staff, who can maintain a focus on different areas of online safety.	Governments	134
17	An additional objective of the Online Safety Act should be to fulfil Australia's international human rights obligations, particularly in addressing Australian based or generated content that is causing or contributing to harms overseas.	Governments	134
18	Campaigns to name and shame private individuals who have engaged in hate speech may amount to doxxying and cyberbullying and should be avoided. This does not apply to comments or reactions made directly to the harmful post, which the poster can stop at any time by removing the post.	Online users	135

About the Online Hate Prevention Institute

The Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI), established in 2012, is Australia's only harm prevention charity dedicated to tackling online hate and extremism. We work with government agencies, civil society groups, and social media platforms to improve the prevention, mitigation and response to all forms of online hate and extremism.

As a specialist charity we combine expertise in technology, law, hate speech, and extremism. We have been at the cutting edge of tackling online hate internationally for over a decade tackling antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism against First Nations Australians, anti-Asian hate, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and many other manifestations of online hate. Our work on extremism has secured the removal of terrorist material thereby reducing the risk of radicalisation online. Our technical recommendations have led to changes to core software by some of the world's largest social media platforms.

About the Online Hate Task Force

The Online Hate Task Force, based in Brussels, is an interfaith group dedicated to making the internet safer for everyone. It monitors, seeks out, and removes hateful content from social networks that targets religious groups and incites violence against them. The Online Hate Task Force has a particular focus on collaboration with legislators and social networks, and is made up of an interfaith team of analysts from Europe, the Middle East and North America.

About the Authors

Dr Andre Oboler is CEO of the Online Hate Prevention Institute and an Honorary Associate in the Law School at La Trobe University. He has worked at the leading edge of international efforts to combat online hate and extremism since 2004. He is a Senior Member of the IEEE and serves as the Chair of the IEEE's Global Public Policy committee, Vice President (Technical Operations) of the IEEE Systems Council, and General Chair of the IEEE Digital Platforms and Societal Harms Conference. Dr Oboler holds a PhD in Computer Science from Lancaster University (UK), a Juris Doctor and an honours degree in Computer Science from Monash University (Australia).

Eliyahou Roth is the Founder and CEO of the Online Hate Task Force. He was born in Brussels and grew up in both Europe and Saudi Arabia, and at 29 he moved to Israel. Understanding early on the damage caused by online hate, Eliyahou has dedicated the last 14 years of his life to combating online hate. He graduated from the Université libre de Bruxelles with degrees in Political Science and Government, and History.

Christopher Noonan is an Analyst at the Online Hate Prevention Institute. Chris received his PhD in Philosophy in 2022, and went on to teach Ethics at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. Having since relocated to Australia, Chris is keen to use his research skills to generate positive real-world outcomes, especially in the area of online hate and misinformation.

Dr Kerstin Steiner is an Associate Professor at the Law School, La Trobe University. She is an internationally recognised award-winning researcher and teacher; leader and mentor with over 20 years' experience in higher education in Australia, Asia and Europe specialising on the intersection of law, politics, economics and society with a focus on the relationship between Islam, law and the state.

Amira Mohammed, a Palestinian activist from East Jerusalem, is the program director at the Online Hate Task Force. She is also a leading voice in reshaping narratives through her role as co-creator and cohost of the influential podcast, *Unapologetic: The Third Narrative*. She previously held the position of Program coordinator at the Regional Organization for Peace, Economics and Security (ROPES). At the age of 21, Amira volunteered closely with the chief of staff, Yael Patir at the Ministry of Regional Cooperation under the Palestinian Israeli Minister Issawi Frej. With a unique blend of personal experiences and professional insights, Amira inspires hope for a more equitable future in the Middle East and beyond.

Jasmine Beinart is an Analyst at the Online Hate Prevention Institute and a PhD Candidate in the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide. Her PhD research focuses on antisemitism in modern Australia. She holds a MA in Holocaust Studies from the University of Haifa, and an honours degree in History and Bachelor of International Studies from the University of Adelaide. Jasmine previously worked at the Adelaide and Melbourne Holocaust Museums, and undertook internships at Yad Vashem and the Wiener Holocaust Library.

Jessen Beinart is an Analyst at the Online Hate Prevention Institute. He is a Software Engineer and has worked in a range of industries, including defence, medical and cyber security. Jessen joined OHPI in 2023 and has an interest in combating extremism and antisemitism. He holds a Bachelor of Mechatronics Engineering from the University of Western Australia.

Willem Oliver is an Analyst at the Online Hate Prevention Institute. He was born and raised in South Africa during the transition from apartheid. This has developed his desire to experience different cultures and help grow understanding and unity between people. Willem has grown up working with his hands in various trades. Now in Australia he is studying towards a mechanical engineering degree in the hopes of helping to shape the future.

Stephen McNamara is a Software Engineer at the Online Hate Prevention Institute. He has previously worked in console and PC game development, IT management for an online health and safety training provider, and teaching in academia. He has a Bachelor of Science majoring in Computer Science from Monash University.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The war between Israel and Gaza that began in October 2023 led to a rise in online hate targeting communities associated with both sides of the conflict. This report looks at religious vilification against Muslims and racism targeting Palestinians or Arabs.

Religious vilification against Muslims targets Muslims regardless of where they live, e.g. in Australia, Europe, or the US, and not just in the conflict area in the Middle East. This religious vilification targets people regardless of their ethnicity. It targets recent converts to Islam as much as it targets those whose families have been Muslims for generations. It targets Muslims from South East Asia, as much as it targets Muslims from the Middle East. Some of the content collected was not anti-Muslim in character, but specifically racist against Palestinians or more generally against Arabs. This content attacked its target based on their ethnicity regardless of their religion. It attacked Christian or secular Palestinians or Arabs as much as Muslim Palestinians or Arabs. This report covers both anti-Muslim hate and these two forms of racism.

This report is produced as a partnership between two not-for-profit organisations working in the space of online hate. The Online Hate Prevention Institute is an Australian charity established in 2012 and tackling all forms of online hate. The Online Hate Task Force is a Brussels based not-for-profit primarily tackling online religious vilification.

The Online Hate Prevention Institute published the world's first systematic research into religious vilification against Muslims on social media (online Islamophobia) back in 2013.[1] That report was highlighted, and its key findings shared, in a report to the 41st Council of Foreign Ministers of countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.[2] An updated and expanded discussion of the data in the report was published as a chapter in the book "Islamophobia in Cyberspace: Hate Crimes Go Viral".[3] A second report with a larger sample of data into religious vilification against Muslims followed in 2015.[4] This second report was cited in a Special Rapporteur's report to the thirty-fifth session of the UN Human Rights Council.[5] The Online Hate Prevention Institute has also published a range of articles about anti-Muslim hate over the years which can be seen in a dedicated section of our website.[6]

The Online Hate Task Force has years of expertise in identifying, reporting, and securing removal of religious vilification, including anti-Muslim hate. The Online Hate Task Force's

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[1] Andre Oboler, *Islamophobia on the Internet: The growth of online hate targeting Muslims* (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2013). https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1971792213/view

[2] Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, *Seventh OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia: October 2013 - April 2014* (Presented to the 41st Council of Foreign Ministers, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 18-19 June 2014). https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2014/en/reports/islamophoba_7th_report_2014.pdf

[3] Andre Oboler, "The normalisation of Islamophobia through social media: Facebook" in Imran Awan, *Islamophobia in Cyberspace: Hate Crimes Go Viral* (Routledge, 2016).

[4] Andre Oboler, *SAMIH: Spotlight on Anti-Muslim Internet Hate Interim Report* (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2015). https://ohpi.org.au/anti-muslim-hate-interim-report/

[5] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on his mission to Australia* (AHRC/35/41/Add.2, 9 June 2017). https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session35/list-reports

[6] https://ohpi.org.au/anti-muslim-hate/

lead on this project, Amira, played a significant role both in identifying new manifestations of hate discussed in this report, and in personally gathering a significant amount of the data behind this report. As a Palestinian and a Muslim, Amira's insights on new forms of content targeting these two communities has been particularly valuable.

This report is the second in a set of reports the organisations have produced looking at online hate during the current conflict. The first of these reports, published in March 2024, examined the rise in antisemitism.[7] The data for that report and this one was collected at the same time, using the same methodology, and with the same number of hours of data collection dedicated to each report. This allows some comparison of the prevalence of different narratives of hate, and the way social media platforms are responding.

The methodology section of this report describes in detail our processes for finding, identifying, recording, and classifying data. This process is designed to allow an effective comparison between the level of hate on each platform. It also allows us to find data that may be missed through more automated or AI based approaches.

The section on the prevalence of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab hate follows. While we don't have a recent sample of anti-Muslim hate before the current conflict, through comparisons with other data we can state with certainty that religious vilification against Muslims has increased substantially. The racism against Palestinians or Arabs, while notably present, was less prevalent than the religious vilification and made up only 9% of the data collected. We believe the volume of racist content, particularly against Palestinians, began increasing around May 2024, and further research is needed. Subject to securing funding, we hope to collect a new sample of data one year on from the data shown in this report.[8]

After providing the prevalence, the next section looks at the removal rates. Content was reported at the time it was collected. We examine the removal rates at multiple points in time, the final one (presented here) was examined in June 2024, at least 4 months after the data was collected. In the case of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube the final removal rates are after sharing our data with our liaisons at Meta and Google, where the companies undertook a more detailed analysis of the data and removed additional items.

The report continues with a look at each platform and how anti-Muslim hate presents on that platform, including it's distribution on that platform across the 11 categories of hate we examine in this report. We provide examples from our data for each platform. These examples generally represent the more common forms of anti-Muslim hate found on that platfrom.

Next each of the types of hate are examined. For each type of hate we provide a graph showing the relative prevalence of that type of hate across the different platforms, and examples illustrating how that type of hate appears on each platform.

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[7] Andre Oboler *et al*, *Online Antisemitism After 7 October 2023* (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2024). https://ohpi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Online_Antisemitism_After_October_7.pdf
[8] You can donate at: https://ohpi.org.au/donate/ or contact us (https://ohpi.org.au/contact-us/) for larger donations or grants.

Where examples of hate are presented in this report we have anonymised the poster, as we do in almost all our work. This is part of our commitment to online safety as the backlash can at times be more serious than the original hate.

The additional discussion section considers a number of issues highlighted by the data and current discussions around tackling anti-Muslim hate. This includes a consideration of the terms "anti-Muslim hate" or "Islamophobia" to describe the work covered by this report, a practical consideration of the popularity of these two terms, a detailed discussion on the differences in scope given to these terms, then a consideration of "anti-Muslim racism" as another alternative and the implications of this term. We provide our recommendation on terminology. Next we discuss Sharia law, a topic which is often discussed but poorly understood by those who engage in anti-Muslim hate. We consider content that is often mislabelled as anti-Muslim hate, and finally consider some matters related to regulation, particularly with respect to Australia where the Online Safety Act is currently under review.

We sum up the findings of this report and provide some final discussion in the conclusion.

Methodology

Data collection

The main sample of data used in the report was collected between 27 October 2023 and 8 February 2024. The data was collected across 10 social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, Telegram, LinkedIn, Gab, Reddit, and BitChute. An equal amount of time, 16 hours in total, was spent on each platform. The 16 hours were spent in discrete one hour blocks, and these blocks of time were spread across the collection period. To eliminate variations in speed by different staff members, each staff member collected data across every platform. One cycle of collection involved a person completing 10 one-hours monitoring blocks, one on each of the platforms. Each researcher collected cycles of data spaced across the collection period.

This approach, with 16 cycles of sampling, avoids bias from differing speeds of collection between staff, the time of collection, the algorithms' choice of content to show a particular person (based on their location, history, or other factors), or very short term trends such as a topic trending and influencing conversation on a particular day.

Each hour of monitoring began by searching for content keywords and phrases. In addition to searching with the in-built search capacity of each platform, a range of search engines were also used to search for content with keywords and phrases with the search limited to the domain of a particular social media platform. This avoided limitations that have been built into some platforms at the level of restrictions on certain searches, or alteration of the search results, when using the platform's in-built search function. Once the first items of anti-Muslim hate were found, the comments on that content were reviewed and included as extra data points if they were also examples of anti-Muslim hate or racism. Next, other content posted by those commenting or expressing support for the anti-Muslim hate content were examined using a snowballing approach. Data would continue to be gathered in this manner, moving further and further from the content found through searches, through the network of those engaging and socially supporting the hate, until the assigned one hour period for the data collection was completed.

This approach overcomes some of the significant limitations in data collection approaches that only use searches for keywords and phrases, or image searches, to uncover online hate. These limitations include difficulty capturing hate speech that uses:
- Coded language to avoid the search terms
- Indirect speech e.g. "we know what they are like" where the "they" is provided by the context of the preceding conversation
- Hate that is expressed in images where the text is part of the image. This can be converted to text and checked but is resource intensive so may not always happen.
- Hate that is expressed in images with no words in the image, which is increasingly common with AI generated images
- videos where the hate is in the narration / words on screen / imagery, etc.

The removal rates in this report provide data not found in the transparency reports produced by the social media companies. To better address the problem it is essential that better data

is collected, including data that is at a more specific level than "hate speech". Anti-Muslim hate should be one of the categories that can be explicitly reported. The category of racism is useful, but a more useful category would be based on racism against specific groups. The categories of *anti-Palestinian racism*, *anti-Arab racism,* or at least *racism targeting one or more groups from the Middle East and North Africa region* as part of a scheme dividing the world geographically, is preferable.

Recommendation 1: Platforms should have a team with enhanced expertise in anti-Muslim hate. Platform Trust and Safety staff should be able to refer hard cases to that team if uncertain about a complaint. The handling of complaints that users marked as anti-Muslim hate should be monitored by the platform's experts in this area by reviewing a random sample of these complaints and comparing their responses to those of regular reviewers.

Recommendation 2: Platforms should provide specific transparency reports on anti-Muslim hate, and reports on other specific forms of hate, rather than generic hate speech reports. Governments may need to regulate to require this to ensure it occurs.

Recommendation 3: Platforms should fund audits, like this report, and use them to improve their responses to anti-Muslim hate. To create the best understanding of the problem, such reports should examine data across multiple platforms, not just a company's own platform(s).

Recommendation 4: Far more investment from platforms, governments, and the public is needed to maintain work like that carried out for this report on an ongoing basis. A diversity of funding sources is recommended

Once an item of anti-Muslim hate and/or anti-Palitinian or anti-Arab racism was found, our researchers completed a form to log the item. The form captured who logged the item and when, the platform, the URL of the item, the location where a screen capture of the item was stored, the location where video content was stored (if the item was a video), and then the subcategories of hate that apply to the item (multiple sub-categories could be selected for a single item). Researchers could also mark the item as containing other forms of hate, such as other forms of racism or religious vilification, or other types of hate such as misogyny.

The general location of the poster was recorded as: North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Australia, other (known), or unknown. A specific location could also be added. An example of "other known" is data from South Africa. Location data was based on either the account explicitly stating its location, or the content or network of the person providing a very strong indication. As part of recording the data researchers also reported the content to the platform, using the usual reporting mechanisms available to all users, as they collected it.

Recommendation 5: Platforms should allow users to identify content not only as hate speech, or hate speech based on race or on religion, but specifically as religious vilification against Muslims, racism against Palestinians, or racism against Arabs.

Identification of content as anti-Muslim hate or racism

Those collecting the data were given past reports from the Online Hate Prevention Institute on anti-Muslim hate to help understand our categories and the sort of data to be collected. An initial sample of data for this report was collected by the lead data collector, Amira. Her lived experience as a Palestinian Muslim, as well as expertise from working in this space over a number of years, guided her collection of data. This data was in turn considered by other data collectors to help further calibrate their understanding of the kinds of data to be collected, using current examples. Amira's participation added an element of co-design that informed the data collection as a whole.

Where there was doubt the team was able to discuss specific examples. The boundaries on the term "anti-Muslim hate", as discussed later in this report, also shaped what was and was not collected. Content that was merely critical of Islam was not collected, but if it made generalisations about Muslims as a group then it was collected. Content specifically critical of Hamas, or attacking Hamas, was not collected. Content generalising about all Palestinians, or blaming Palesitnians in general for the actions of Hamas and other specific groups, was collected.

While the categories we use are the same as those in our past reports, and were initially created using a grounded theory approach, driven by the data, they were formulated in 2013. We included a category of "other" to capture elements of anti-Muslim hate that did not fit well within our schema. This is an acknowledgement that in the decade since the categories were first created, the language of hate may have shifted in new directions. In some cases the category "other" was used to capture items that would otherwise be missed as they did not conform to the previous categories. In other cases content had a recognised element of anti-Muslim hate under the previous schema, but also demonstrated something new, so was coded with both the category from the previous schema and the category "other". While beyond the scope of this research, further analysis is needed into the collection of items coded as other to determine if there is enough similarity between segments of this data to form additional categories that can be used in the future.

Nominal Daily Collection Rate

In this report we use the concept of the Nominal Daily Collection Rate (NDCR), which is the number of items that would, on average, be collected in an hour of monitoring, multiplied by 8 to represent an 8 hour work day. NDCR can be calculated overall, on a per-platform basis, or for a category of hate.

NDCR is a reflection of how easy it is to find anti-Muslim hate, anti-Palestinian racism, or anti-Arab racism on a platform. A high prevalence makes finding it quicker, as less time is spent searching for it, or reading and ignoring items that are not relevant, which allows more items to be gathered per hour. The rate is also impacted by the nature of the content. For example, a video that is clearly relevant based on its title and description might be captured as quickly as a post, but a video that is possibly relevant, or where the nature of the anti-Muslim hate or racism is unclear, must be watched (or at least sampled by watching segments of it), taking more time and reducing the number of items that could be gathered.

Prevalence of online hate

This report is based on a sample of 1169 items. The nominal Daily Collection Rate, that is the average number of items that can be found over 8 hours, varies by platform from around 34 items on LinkedIn or YouTube through to 132 items on X (Twitter).

Overall 91% of the content was targetted at Muslims, being various forms of anti-Muslim hate, but did not include any elements of racism targeting people for being Palestinian or Arab. In contrast, of the remaining 9%, almost all of it (92%) also involved anti-Msulim hate.

We don't have a Nominal Daily Collection Rate for anti-Muslim hate from before this sample was collected, but we know that prior to October 2023 anti-Muslim hate was less prevelant than antisemitism, and the NDCR for antisemitism at this time was 27. The NDCR for anti-Muslim hate is now 58, which shows that the rate of anti-Muslim hate has increase by more than double since October 2023. The rate of increase may be much larger than double given we don't have a firm idea on how much less prevalent than antisemitism it was before October 2023. Given the difference was noticeable it is likely the increase in anti-Muslim hate is at least 400%. For comparison, the NDCR for antisemitism since October 2023 is now 145, an increase of between 340% on X and 994% on Gab.

Looked at the data by platform, it is clear anti-Muslim hate is more prevelant on X (Twitter) than on other platforms. There is a step down from X to the far-right platforms Gab and Telegram which have the next largest concentrations of anti-Muslim hate. There is another step change to the rest of the social media platforms. X, Gab and Telegram together account for 50% of all the content we collected for this report across the 10 social media platforms.

Graph 1
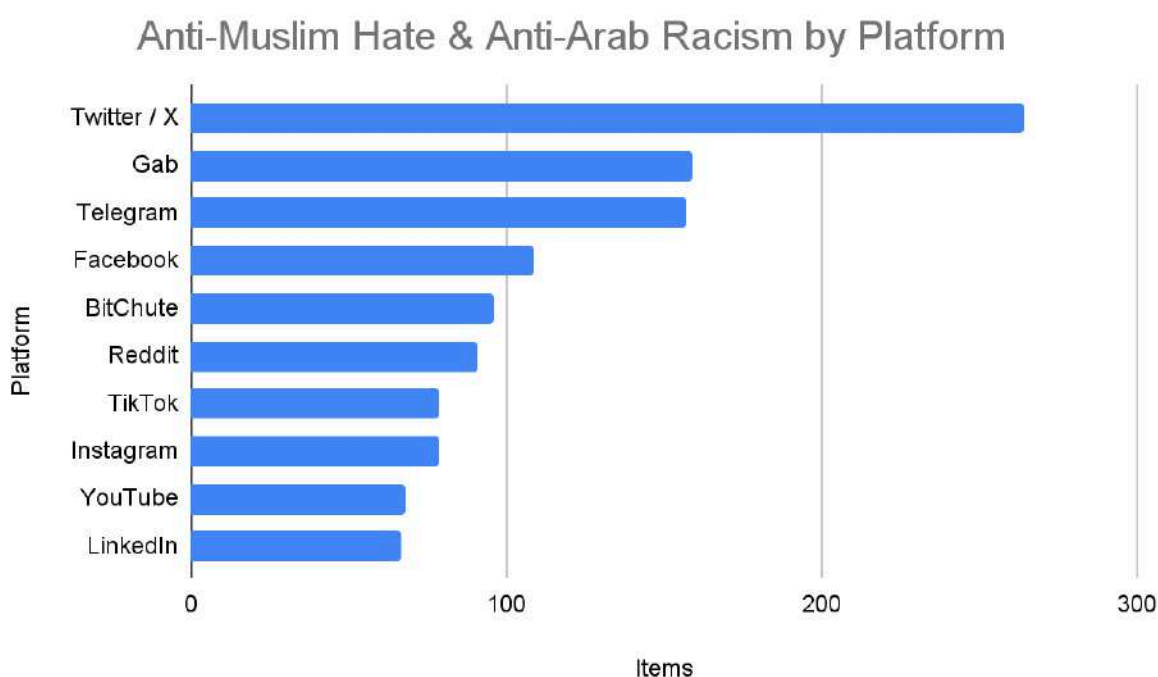
Recommendation 6: X needs to add proactive, ideally automated, removal of anti-Muslim hate speech. This should be a basic expectation for any large platform.
While having the equal lowest rates of anti-Muslim hate compared to other platforms, the level of hate on LinkedIn is still suprising. LinkedIn does better for anti-Muslim hate than the other platforms, but it is still comparable to YouTube and not that much better than Instagram or TikTok. As a professional platform it should be doing substantially better than this.

The culture of LinkedIn was changed by the Covid-19 pandemic as the divide between personal and professional blurred during times people were working from home. LinkedIn's algorithm accelerated this when it started giving more visibility to personal content over professional content as the company encouraged people to "bring their full, authentic selves" to the platform.[9] LinkedIn is now drawing closer in culture to Facebook and is becoming less "professional". While having the lowest levels of anti-Muslim hate, the level of hate on LinkedIn is similar to that of YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok. A notably lower level of hate might be expected on a platform where people share their personal details and work history, and which may be the first place potential employers look to get additional information about a job applicant.

Graph 2
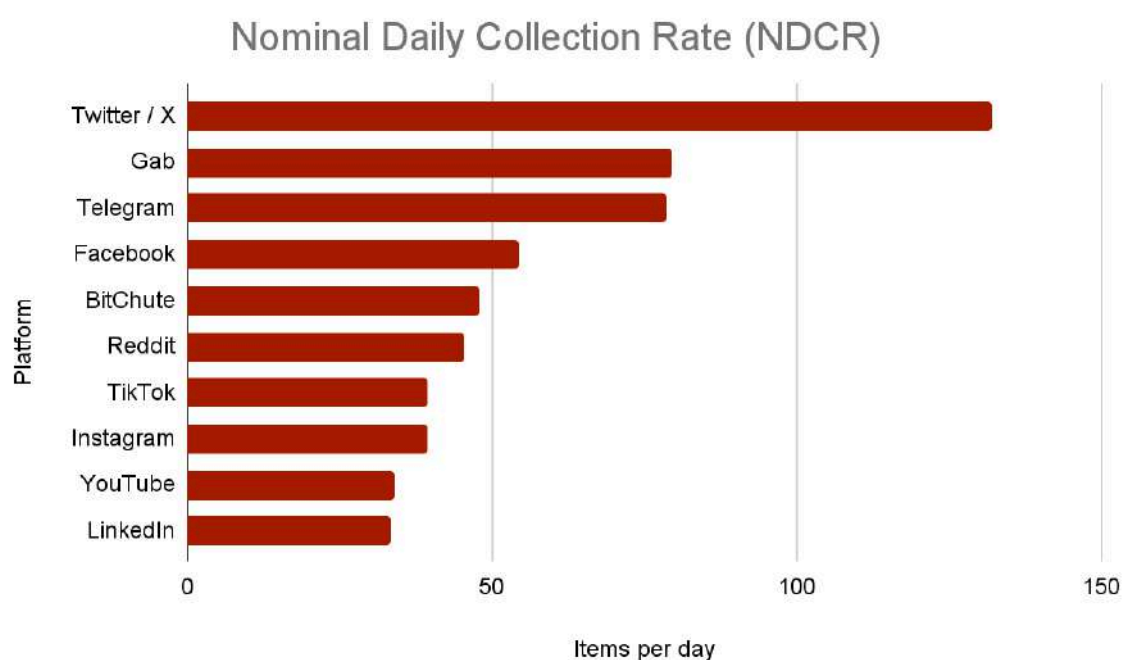
Recommendation 7: LinkedIn needs to be more proactive in removing online hate in light of changes to the culture of the platform.

Another important type of overall analysis is to examine how frequently each narrative of hate appears in the sample. Given that one item can be reported under multiple categories, rather than providing raw numbers this data is presented as the percentage of all content that falls within each category. We share a note of caution in making use of this data as the

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[9] Aditi Shrikant, "Why is everyone crying on LinkedIn? Users share why they're getting so personal on the networking site", *CNBC*, 28 September 2022.
https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/28/how-linkedin-became-so-personal.html

nature of hate can vary significantly between platforms. The disaggregated data by platform later in this report may for some purposes be more useful.

Dehumanisation is the most prevalent at 35%, followed by presenting Muslims as a cultural threat at 33%, and presenting Muslims as a security threat at 28%. Also notable is the high level of "other" which is explored further in this report. While a step lower at 20%, the expression of xenophobia / anti-immigrant hate targeted at Muslims is also significant.

Content promoting the social exclusion of Muslims is at 14% and may give rise to issues of illegal discrimination in society in areas like employment and housing. The fact anti-Muslims jokes are at 10% is worrying, but the fact that incitement to violence against Muslims is also at 10% is concerning.

Graph 3

Percent of items within each category
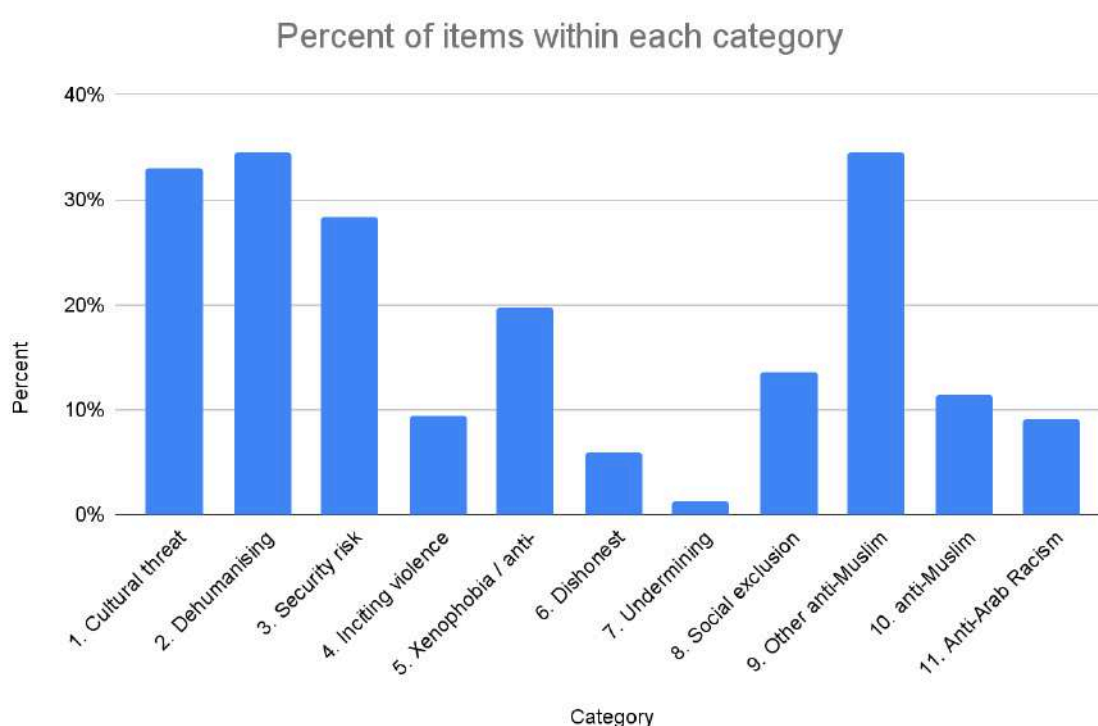
Where possible we also recorded the location of the poster behind the data. While most posters (56%) did not clearly state a location, of those that did, the vast majority were in Europe or North America.

Location	Count	Percent
Australia	31	3%
North America (USA & Canada)	177	15%
Europe (including UK)	210	18%
Middle East	49	4%
Asia	33	3%
Other	14	1%
Can't easily tell	659	56%

Removal Rates

We examined items removed by the 18th of March 2024, and again on the 18th of June. Presented here are the final figures of data removed by 18 June, 2024. In total 379 items were removed, which accounted for 32% of the anti-Muslim hate, anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Arab racism data we had collected.

This data can also be examined by platform, which shows that the removal rates vary significantly, from 54% on BitChute, and 50% on Facebook, down to just 15% on YouTube and 19% on Telegram. Data was reported to all platforms (where possible) using the usual user reporting mechanisms. In the case of Meta we also met with the company and provided them access to the data we had collected from Facebook and Instagram, which helped to raise the removal rate. Data will be provided to YouTube, and to other platforms that wish to have access to it, prior to the release of the next report in this series (the combined report).

Platform	% removed	Items Removed	Items collected
BitChute	54%	52	96
Facebook	50%	54	109
TikTok	43%	34	79
Instagram	39%	31	79
LinkedIn	33%	22	67
Reddit	32%	29	91
Gab	28%	45	159
Twitter / X	28%	73	264
Telegram	19%	30	157
YouTube	15%	10	68

Clearly more needs to be done to correctly identify and remove anti-Muslim hate content that users report. The low accuracy not only leaves the content online, but it discourages users from investing the effort it takes to report content.

Recommendation 8: Governments that have not already done so need to start preparing for potential regulation of online hate.

Recommendation 9: Enforceable expectations should be set by government, and exist outside of the terms of service of any one company, and should be consistent for different providers with respect to equivalent services.

Recommendation 10: eSafety should be given the ability to level small fines to users who engage in harmful online conduct, with larger fines for repeated or more serious offences where criminal proceedings are not being pursued.

A comparison between the prevalence of each type of hate and the associated removal rate is provided on the basis of both hate type and platform. There is generally no link between how common a type of hate is and how effective platforms are at removing that type of hate.

Graph 4

Items of hate on each platform by type

Graph 5

Percent of items removed from each platform by type

Graph 6

| Items by category | Removal rates by category |

Legend: Facebook · YouTube · Twitter / X · Instagram · TikTok · Reddit · LinkedIn · Gab · BitChute · Telegram

Categories:
1. Cultural threat
2. Dehumanising
3. Security risk
4. Inciting violence against Muslims
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee
6. Dishonest
7. Undermining allies
8. Social exclusion
9. Other anti-Muslim
10. anti-Muslim jokes
11. Anti-Arab Racism

Hate by platform

In this section of the report we examine the nature of anti-Muslim hate, racism against Palestinians and racism against Arabs on each platform. In our examinations of each platform we look at the prevalence of each category of hate on that platform. This highlights which narratives of hate are more likely to be encountered on each platform.

The demographics of each platorm's audience, the rules of the platforms, the enforcement of the rules, and the culture of the p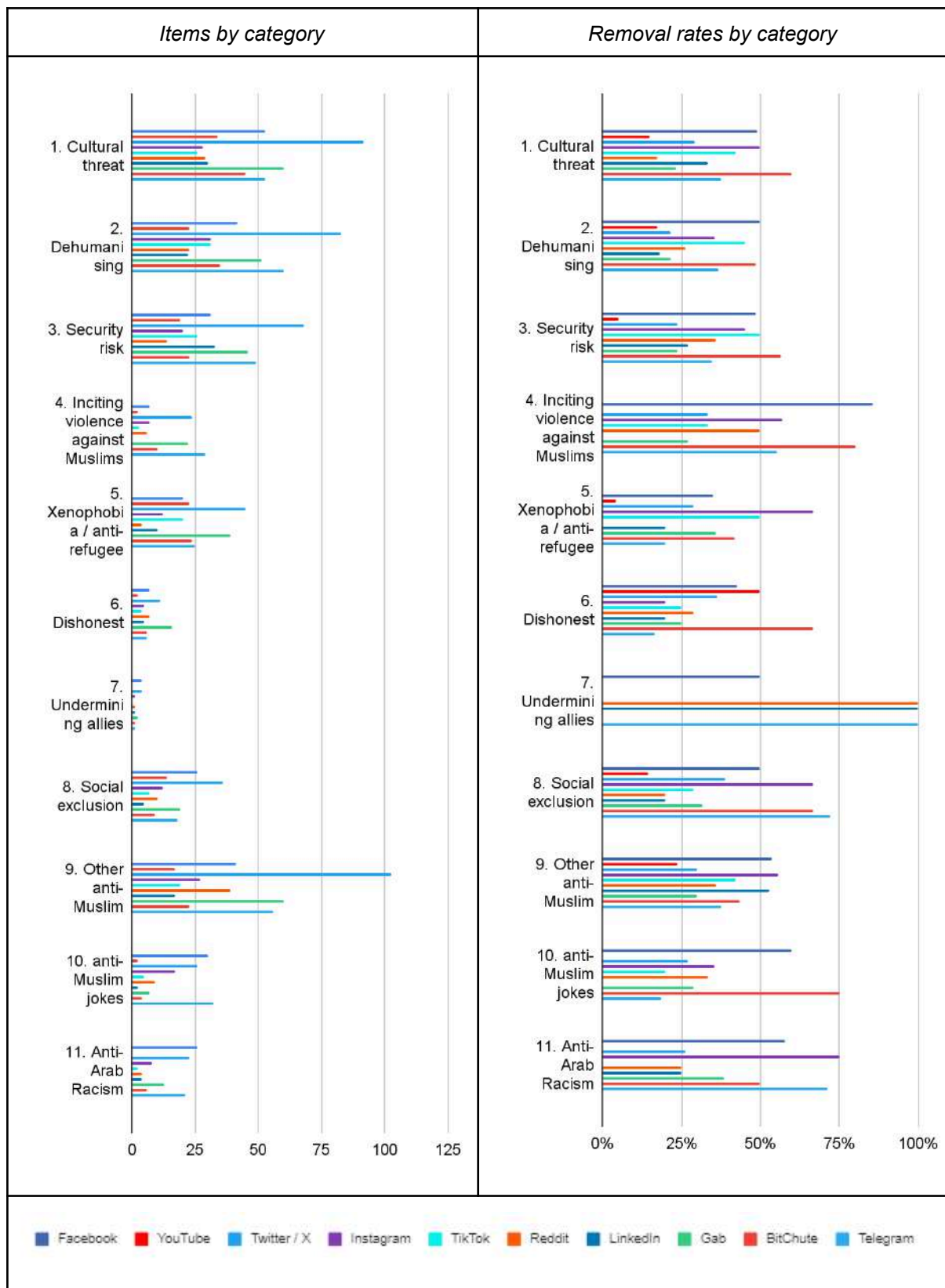latform all play a role in how prevalent a particular category of hate will be on that platform. These factors can allow one type of hate to thrive on a platform, while another is strongly discouraged both by sanctions from the platform and by social pressure from other users.

This section of the report is best used to understand the nature of hate on a particular platform. The difference between the platforms can best be explored in the next section of this report which looks at each category of hate in turn, and explores how it is expressed across each platform.

As discussed in the *Prevalence of Online Hate* section of this report, the breakdown of data by platform shows the hate was far more prevalent on some platforms than on others. In fact, half of all the hate data comes from just three platforms: X, Gab, and Telegram.

Platform	Count	Percent
Twitter / X	264	23%
Gab	159	14%
Telegram	157	13%
Facebook	109	9%
BitChute	96	8%
Reddit	91	8%
TikTok	79	7%
Instagram	79	7%
YouTube	68	6%
LinkedIn	67	6%
TOTAL	1169	

A graph of this data (previously presented as *graph 1*), highlights the significant difference in the amount of data collected on each platform, despite the same amount of time, 16 hours, being spent collecting data from each platform.

Graph 7

Anti-Muslim Hate & Anti-Arab Racism by Platform
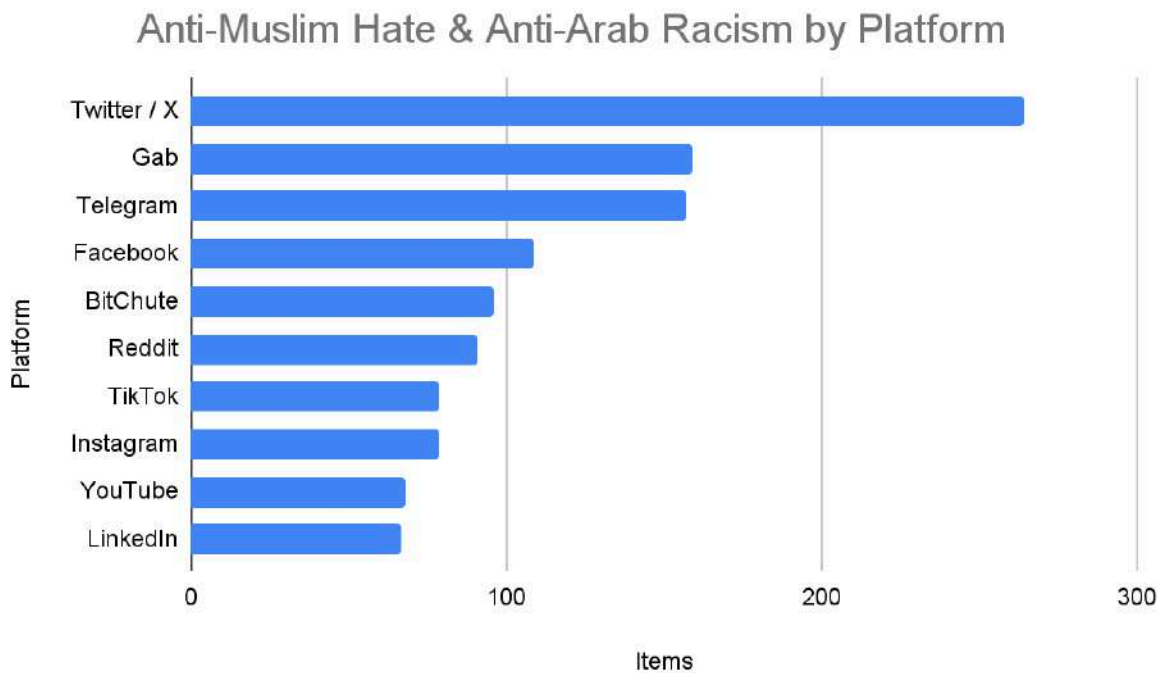
As we explore each platform, we provide three examples of the hate found on that platform. These examples have been selected to help the reader understand the nature of the content on that platform. Each example appears with its item number (*i.e. #2039*). The item number refers to the data ID number of that specific item within our sample. Including the item number in this report for the reader serves the purpose of facilitating discussion and follow up on specific examples, including checking if they are still online.

Facebook

Facebook, owned by Meta, is the most popular of the social media platforms we assessed. In Australia, 66% of the adult population uses Facebook,[10] which is about 13.3 million people.[11] The European Union requires very large online platforms to report their average monthly active users. In October 2023, Facebook was reported to have 259 million active users per month within the EU.[12]

Facebook allows users to share posts with text, images, videos or links to other online content. Other users can usually leave comments on posts. Posts are either public or have limited visibility. Posts can also be shared by pages (such as business pages) which can have multiple people jointly administering them, allowing those with specified roles to post under the page name, and to moderate comments made on the page. Facebook also allows groups in which administrators can control membership, and in which members can make posts (sometimes only after administrator review) and where post visibility may (optionally) be limited to group members. If a group's posts are visible, commenting can be limited to group members only. Our data collection has only come from content on Facebook that is publicly visible i.e. not requiring a group membership or connection with the poster.

In total there were 109 items collected from Facebook. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 287 categorisations, an average of 2.6 categories per item. 49% of the items on Facebook represented Muslims as a cultural threat, while 39% involved demonisation or dehumanisation. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 38% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	53	49%
2. Dehumanising	42	39%
3. Security risk	31	28%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	7	6%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	20	18%
6. Dishonest	7	6%
7. Undermining allies	4	4%
8. Social exclusion	26	24%
9. Other anti-Muslim	41	38%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	30	28%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	26	24%

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[10] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[11] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[12] *Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 Digital Services Act Transparency Report for Facebook*, (Meta Platforms Ireland Limited,
27 October 2023) 22. https://transparency.fb.com/sr/dsa-transparency-report-oct2023-facebook/

Graph 8

Facebook by Category
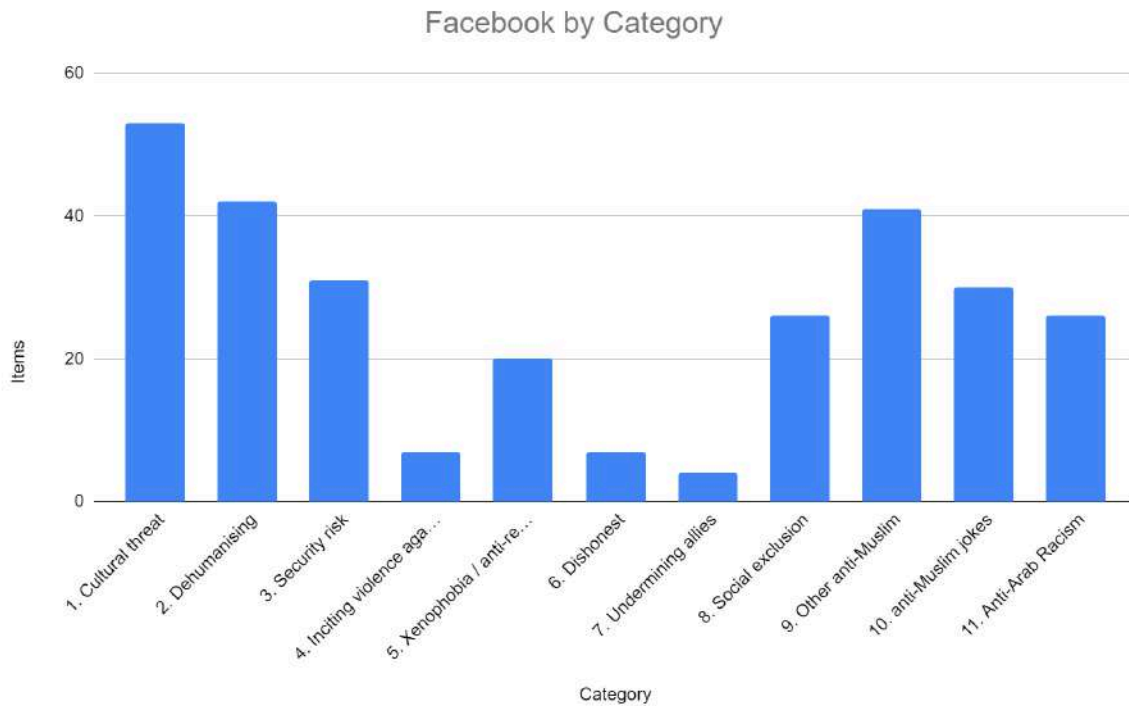
A breakdown of the overlaps between the top four most frequently encountered forms of hate are shown below. It highlights how the narrative of Muslims as a cultural threat most readily combines with other narratives or groups of narratives, while anti-Muslims jokes either avoid overlapping with other narratives or overlap with many other narratives together.

Graph 9

25
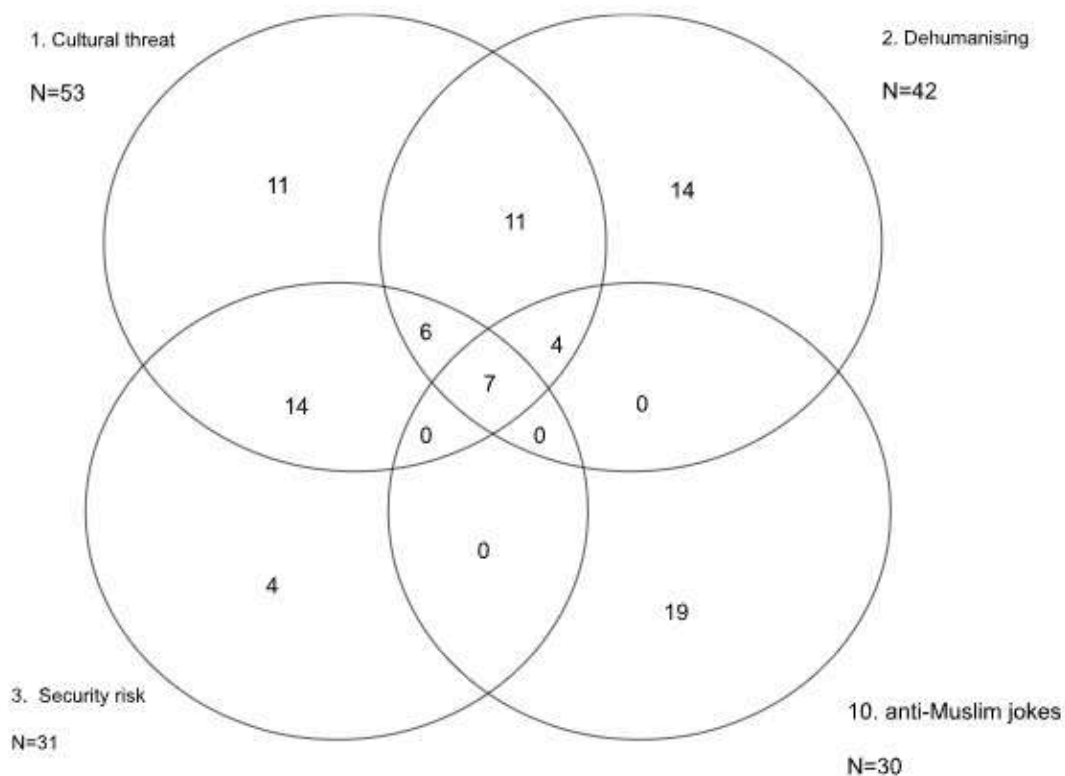
Examples from Facebook

Item #1294 (online)
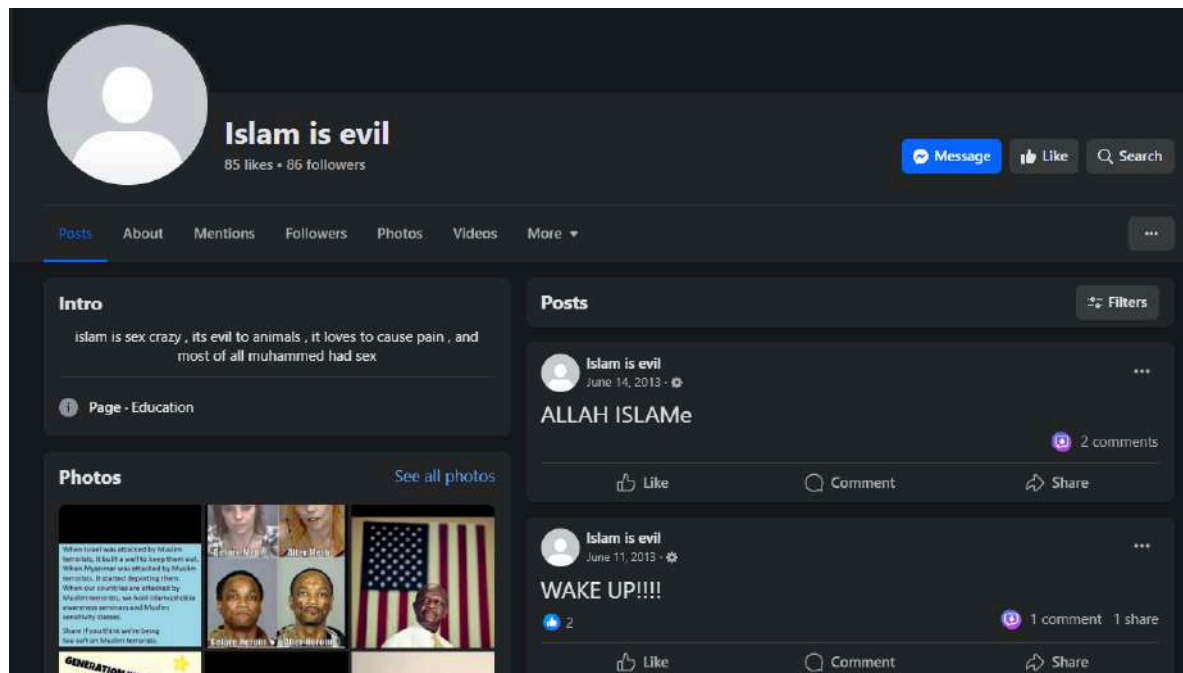
This is a Facebook page called "Islam is evil". Beyond the name, its about information says: "islam is sex crazy , its evil to animals , it loves to cause pain , and most of all muhammed had sex with a 9 year old why are we ok with this ?" This goes beyond criticism of Islam and into demonisation which extends to all Muslims. This is made clear in images from the page which call for people to "fight against Islam" or in another example posts ironically suggests there were nice Nazis and radical Nazis, which given the page name is really a message mocking the idea there are "nice Muslims" and "radical Muslims" (to transpose the idea).
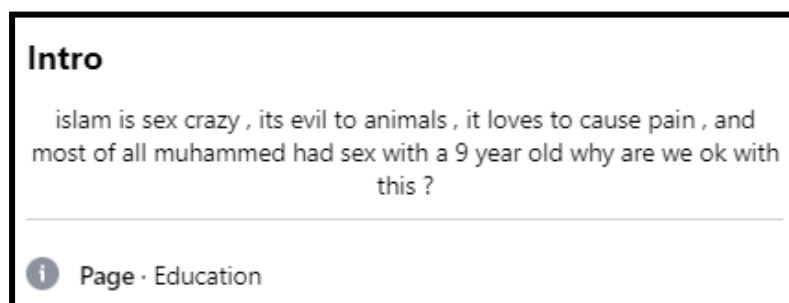
Item #3204 (removed)

7 January at 04:14 ·

Asset strip and deport EVERY single Muslim from Great Britain, Ireland and Europe!
If this does NOT happen then we'll have to either drive them out, force them out or as a last resort, wipe them out!
There's 57 muslim countries they can go back to so they have a huge choice.

INSTAGRAM

5   1 share

Like

This post calls for all Muslims to be deported from the UK, Ireland, and Europe. It then goes further suggesting if this is not done, people will need to drive them out or as a last resort kill them. The post is xenophobia and incites violence.

This post is from a public group with multiple hate speech posts targeting Muslims and others. This particular post uses a news article about a specific group of criminals and with the comment "The true face of Islam" seeks to hold all Muslims accountable or suggest all Muslims are similar.

Instagram

Instagram is a popular social media platform from Meta. In Australia, 43% of the adult population use Instagram,[13] which is around 8.6 million people.[14] The European Union requires very large online platforms to report their average monthly active users in the EU, which for Instagram was most recently reported as 259 million active users a month.[15]

Instagram allows users to post photos and videos, as well as comment on posts. Posts can contain text descriptions. Users can also share "stories" which are viewable for 24 hours. Our research has focused only on publicly visible Instagram content.

In total there were 79 items collected from Instagram. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 168 categorisations, an average of 2.1 categories per item. 39% of the items on Instagram demonise or dehumanise Muslims and 35% present Muslims as a cultural threat. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 34% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	28	35%
2. Dehumanising	31	39%
3. Security risk	20	25%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	7	9%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	12	15%
6. Dishonest	5	6%
7. Undermining allies	1	1%
8. Social exclusion	12	15%
9. Other anti-Muslim	27	34%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	17	22%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	8	10%

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[13] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[14] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[15] *Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 Digital Services Act Transparency Report for Instagram*, (Meta Platforms Ireland Limited,
27 October 2023) 22. https://transparency.fb.com/sr/dsa-transparency-report-oct2023-instagram/

Graph 10
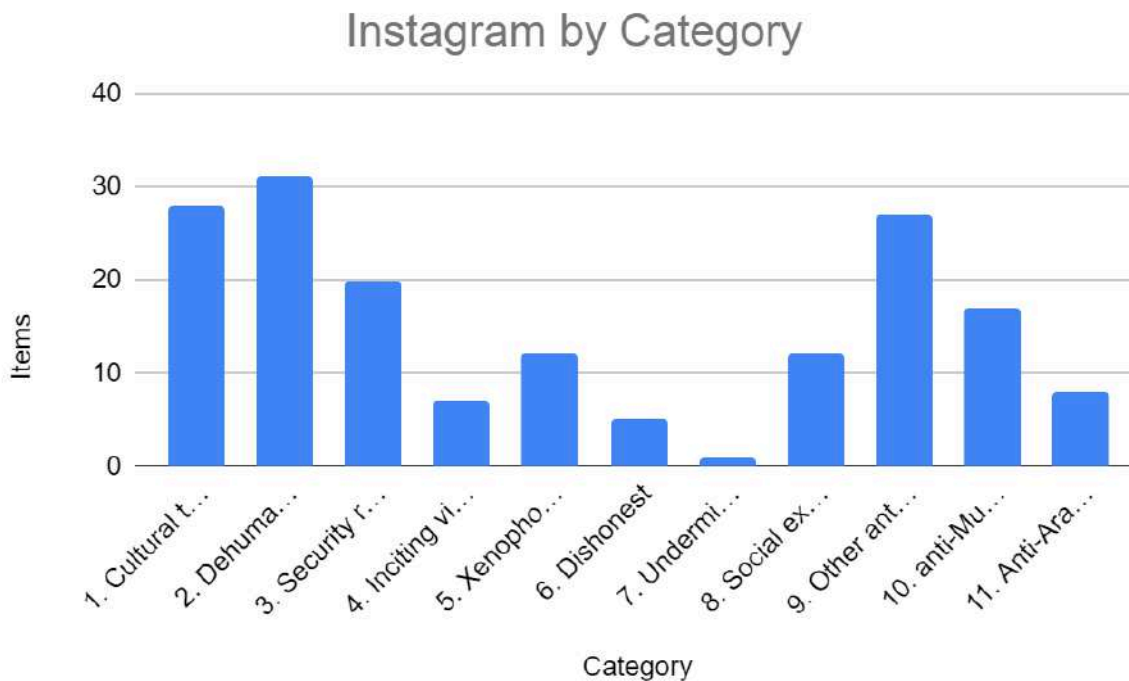
Examples from Instagram

Item #747 (removed)

This image represents all Muslims as violent and seeking entry to Western countries in order to destroy them. It could also be classed as xenophobic. The comment "Hypocrisy and political correctness doesn't pay. The truth will set you free!" combined with the images appears to be advocating the spread of anti-Muslim hate speech.

Item #1677 (removed)

This item appears to speak about Islam as a religion, calling it dangerous and claiming it is not a religion in the Western sense of the word but something else. In an effort to appear acceptable it notes that "there may be millions of peaceful and tolerant Muslims, many of them our neighbours" before going on to suggest Islam is not peaceful and that people are prevented from saying this out of a fear such speak will radicalise Muslims. It is this final point which clearly moves into statements about Muslims, a generalisation that Muslims are violent. This is not simply criticisms of the Islamic religion.

Item #3866 (removed)

This post promotes the trope that Muslims are dishonest, and that this is part of the religion of Islam.

This is an example of an intersection where claims about religion become negative stereotyping about people.

The doctrine in question is Taqiyya, which relates to deception in warfare. This is a practice far from unique to Islam.

In World War II the Allies created a fictional US army division and used fake blowup tanks.[16]

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[16] https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/d-days-parachuting-dummies-and-inflatable-tanks

TikTok

TikTok, owned by ByteDance, is an increasingly popular social media platform that allows users to upload short videos (anywhere in length between 3 seconds to 10 minutes). Users can comment on and like videos. Once a video ends, a new one automatically starts playing. In Australia 21% of the adult population use TikTok,[17] which is around 4.2 million people.[18] As of October 2023, in the European Union 136 million people use TikTok.[19] In the US TikTok has over 170 million active monthly users.[20]

In total there were 79 items collected from TikTok. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 143 categorisations, an average of 1.8 categories per item. 39% of the items demonise or dehumanise Muslims, 33% present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 33% as a security threat. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 24% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	26	33%
2. Dehumanising	31	39%
3. Security risk	26	33%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	3	4%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	20	25%
6. Dishonest	4	5%
7. Undermining allies	0	0%
8. Social exclusion	7	9%
9. Other anti-Muslim	19	24%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	5	6%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	2	3%

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[17] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[18] Based adult population data from: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid Seen 28 July 2024.
[19] *TikToks DSA Transparency Report 2023* (TikTok, 25 October 2023) 23. https://sf16-va.tiktokcdn.com/obj/eden-va2/fsslreh7uulsn/DSA%20Report%20October%202023/DSA%20draft%20Transparency%20report%20-%2025%20October%202023.pdf. Manually summed each country to get total.
[20] Shou Chew, *Opening Statement* (Presented to Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis, 31 January 2024). https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/opening-statement-senate-judiciary-committee-hearing

Graph 11

TikTok by Category
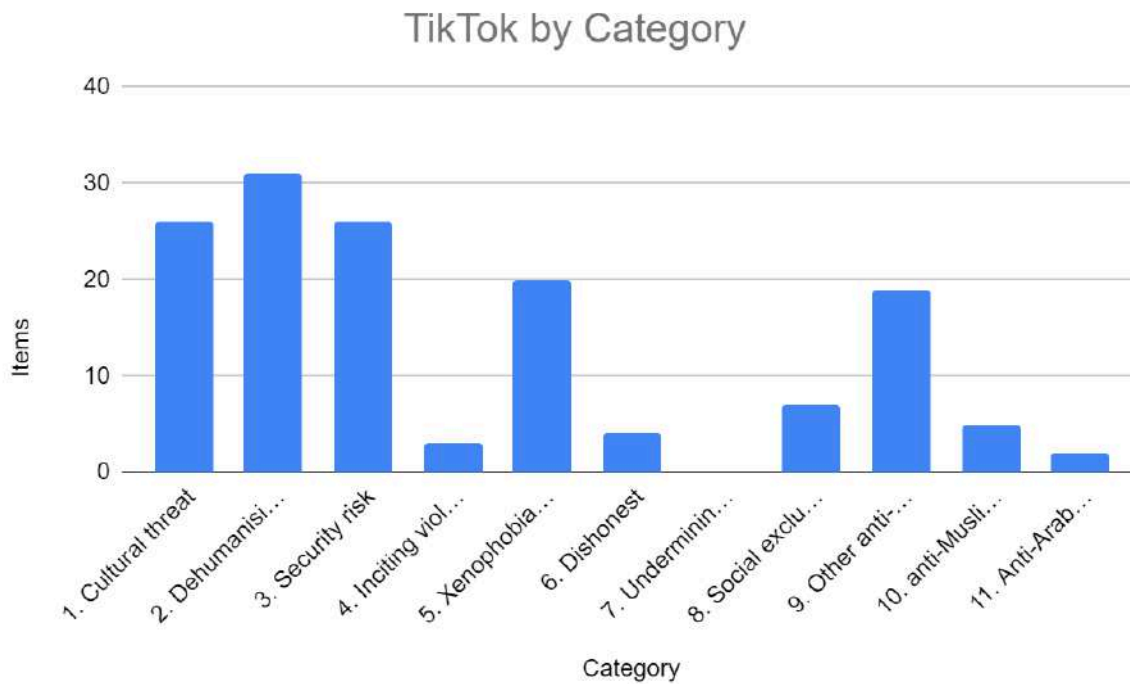
Examples from TikTok

Item #521 (online)
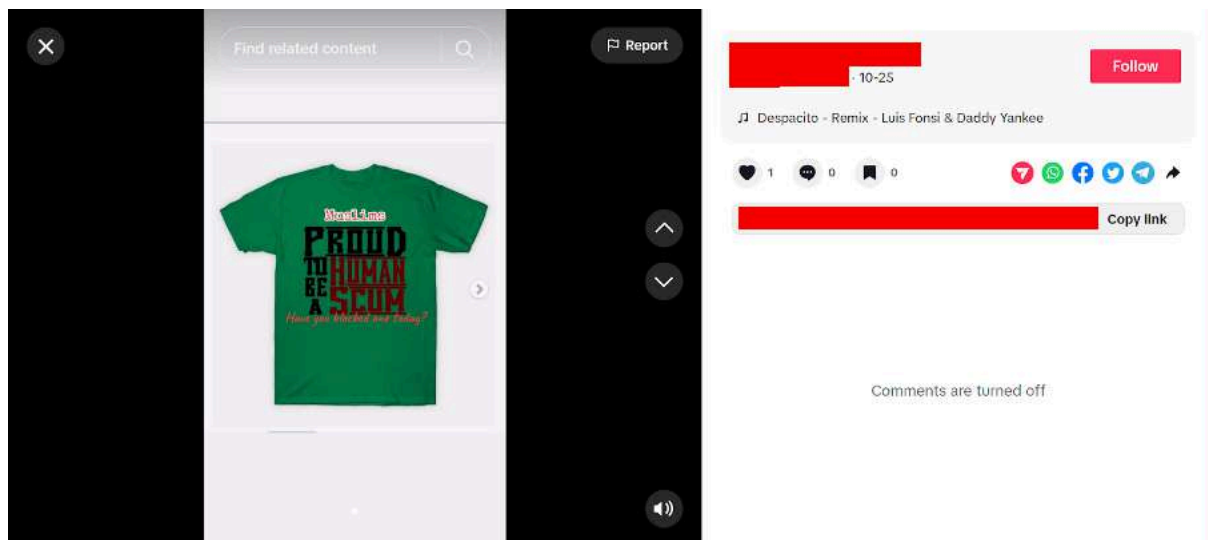
This image dehumanises Muslims with its message that Muslims do not live up to the standards of others, while also advocating for social exclusion with the fine print regarding blocking.

Item #2283 (removed)

Islam is the stupidest of all stupid religions.
Join us in the 21st Century.

5h ago   ♡ 2   Reply
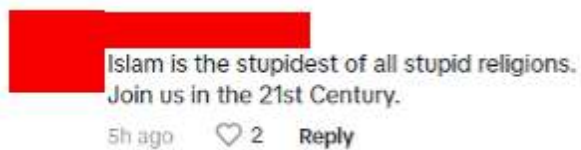
This comment gives a straightforward insult to Muslims, portraying Islam as backwards, in response to a video explaining how Islam guides an aspect of the original poster's behaviour.

Item #3844 (removed)
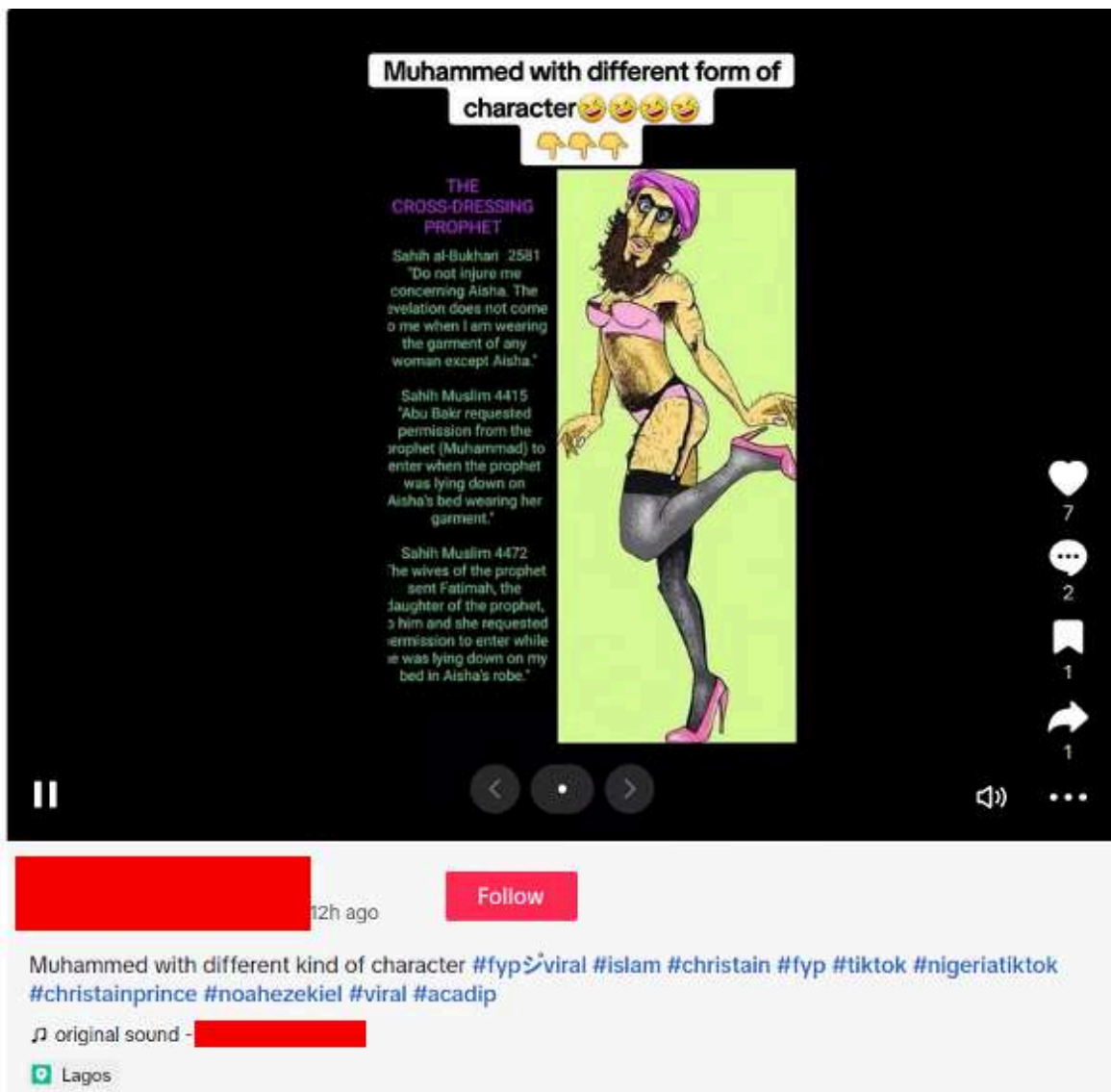
This item dehumanises through the misinterpretation of out-of-context quotes from the Quran to portray the founder of Islam as sexually deviant. It is also intended to provoke Muslims, as images of Muhammed are to be avoided, and this image is a deliberately insulting portrayal.

X (Twitter)

X, formerly known as Twitter, owned by X Corp, is one of the largest Social media platforms. In Australia 16% of the adult population use X,[21] which is around 3.2 million people.[22] X was most recently reported as having 115 million active users within the EU per month.[23]

People on X can share posts (formerly known as "Tweets") which may consist of short text, images and/or video. Users can comment on other posts, like posts, repost them, and quote them (which is similar to reposting, but gives the X user the chance to make their own comment about the post they are sharing). Verified users can add Community Notes to posts on X, which all users are then able to vote on. The purpose of Community Notes is to give context to posts and can also counter mis- and disinformation.

In total there were 264 items collected from X (Twitter). These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 515 categorisations, an average of 2.0 categories per item. 35% of the items present Muslims as a cultural threat, while 31% demonise or dehumanise Muslims. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 38% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	92	35%
2. Dehumanising	83	31%
3. Security risk	68	26%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	24	9%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	45	17%
6. Dishonest	11	4%
7. Undermining allies	4	2%
8. Social exclusion	36	14%
9. Other anti-Muslim	103	39%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	26	10%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	23	9%

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[21] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[22] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[23] *DSA Transparency Report - April, 2024* (X, April 2024). Report for period August 28, 2023 to October 20, 2023. https://transparency.twitter.com/dsa-transparency-report.html

Graph 12

X (Twitter) by Category
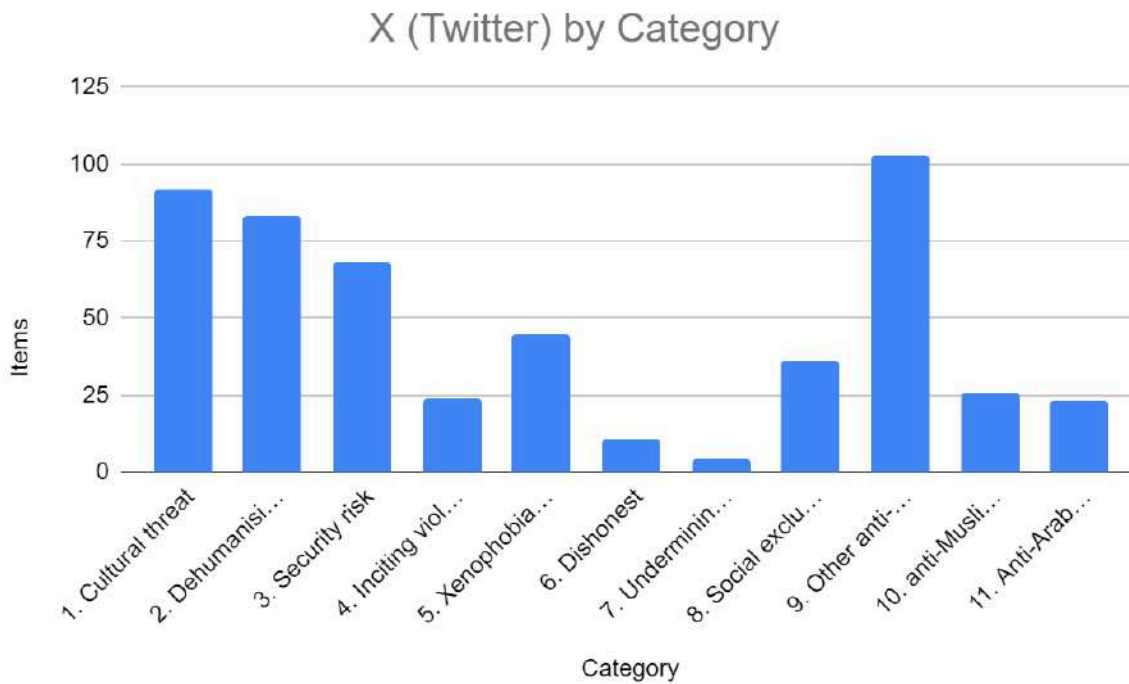
Examples from X (Twitter)

Item #2495 (online)

> Jan 8
>
> My wish is for all western countries to **deport Muslim** migrants back to their own country. They will never assimilate with western values. I absolutely hate the burqas, I hate the fact the women haven't got a voice. It's time we pushed back on these evil people!
>
> 1   6   46   532

This item calls for the exclusion of all Muslims from the western world, portraying them as a cultural threat to the west.

Item #1552 (online)

My guess is the muzzas were parked illegally whilst at mosque praying to the child molester and the traffic wardens thought they'd be clever and ticket them, other muzzas saw what was happening and decided muzzas should be allowed to park where ever whilst praying. tbh, its funny

6:18 PM · Dec 26, 2023 · **161** Views

This item dehumanises and demonises Muslims in multiple ways, starting with its use of slurs. It invents a narrative where the events depicted in an earlier tweet were caused by Muslims not following the law, and implies that this causes Muslims to be a cultural threat. It also repeats an offensive trope about the prophet Muhammad to dehumanise worshippers.

Item #3790 (online)

Another brain dead motherfucker! Britain is taking over by **Muslims** and this loser is busy with Israel

Likud minister likens UK's backing for Palestinian state post-war to Nazi appeasement timesofisrael.com/likud-minister...

In this item Muslims are considered an external threat to Britain, and that a xenophobic response to them should be prioritised over other actions.

YouTube

YouTube, owned by Google, is a social media platform used for sharing and viewing videos. In Australia 62% of the adult population use YouTube,[24] which is around 12.5 million people.[25] YouTube was most recently reported to have 417 million active users a month in the EU.[26]

YouTube allows users to upload and view videos, as well as comment on these videos. Users can also livestream videos.

In total there were 68 items collected from YouTube. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 136 categorisations, an average of 2.0 categories per item. 50% of the items Muslims as a cultural threat. 34% demonised or dehumanised Muslims and 34% involved Xenophobia or anti-refugee sentiment. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 25% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	34	50%
2. Dehumanising	23	34%
3. Security risk	19	28%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	2	3%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	23	34%
6. Dishonest	2	3%
7. Undermining allies	0	0%
8. Social exclusion	14	21%
9. Other anti-Muslim	17	25%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	2	3%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	0	0%

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[24] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[25] Based adult population data from: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[26] *Information about Monthly Active Recipients under the Digital Services Act (EU)*, (YouTube, 16 August 2023) 3. https://storage.googleapis.com/transparencyreport/report-downloads/pdf-report-24_2023-1-1_2023-6-30_en_v1.pdf

Graph 13

YouTube by Category
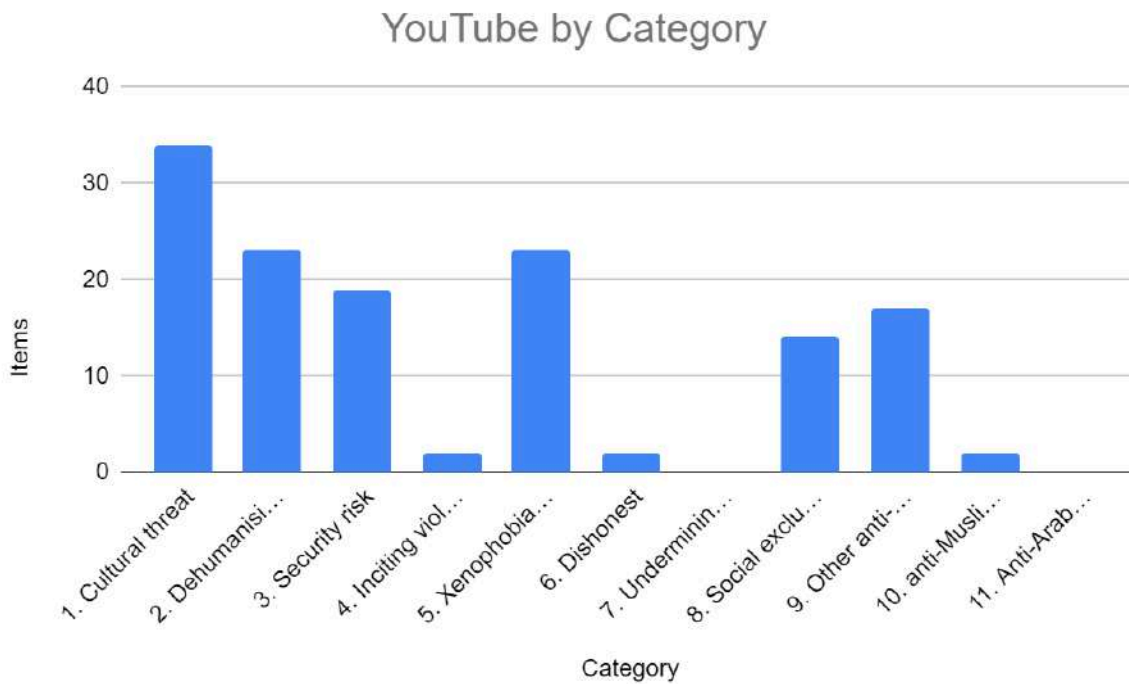
Examples from YouTube

Item #495 (online)

This comment classifies all Muslims as a threat. As a response to a news video about authorities in several countries increasing anti-terrorist activities it implies that Muslims in general are a threat to the security of western nations.

This video and comments by the poster describes Muslims as infiltrating and taking over the state of Minnesota. The video uses similarities between the new state flag and the Somalian flag as evidence of Muslim influence becoming a threat to the security of state institutions, while in the comments the poster portrays Muslims as dishonest, implying that they are controlled by Satan, the master deceiver. Taken together, this says Muslims should be excluded as a threat to Christian values.

Item #3930 from YouTube (removed)

This item calls for the exclusion of Muslims from the western world, by showing Islam as a threat.

Telegram

Telegram Messenger, more commonly known simply as Telegram, is an instant messaging app, developed by Telegram Messenger Inc. It is known for its privacy and encryption. In Australia 10% of the adult population use Telegram,[27] which is around 1.8 million people.[28] Worldwide, Telegram has 950 million users each month.[29]

Telegram allows users to instant message other users, as well as to make audio and video calls between individuals or groups. Telegram also has more traditional social media features such as ability to post "stories", create large public or private groups, and create channels in which only the channel administrator can provide updates (which other users are not able to respond to). Telegram allows users to share text, images, video, voice messages and files.

A total of 157 items were collected from Telegram. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 350 categorisations, an average of 2.2 categories per item. 38% of the items demonise or dehumanise Muslims, 34% present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 31% as a security threat. 36% of the content had some element classified as "other".

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	53	34%
2. Dehumanising	60	38%
3. Security risk	49	31%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	29	18%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	25	16%
6. Dishonest	6	4%
7. Undermining allies	1	1%
8. Social exclusion	18	11%
9. Other anti-Muslim	56	36%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	32	20%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	21	13%

[27] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[28] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[29] Zak Doffman, "Telegram Plays With Fire, Gets Burned—950 Million Users Beware", *Forbes,* 24 July 2024 https://www.forbes.com/sites/zakdoffman/2024/07/23/new-telegram-attack-warning-samsung-google-android-users-targeted/

Graph 14
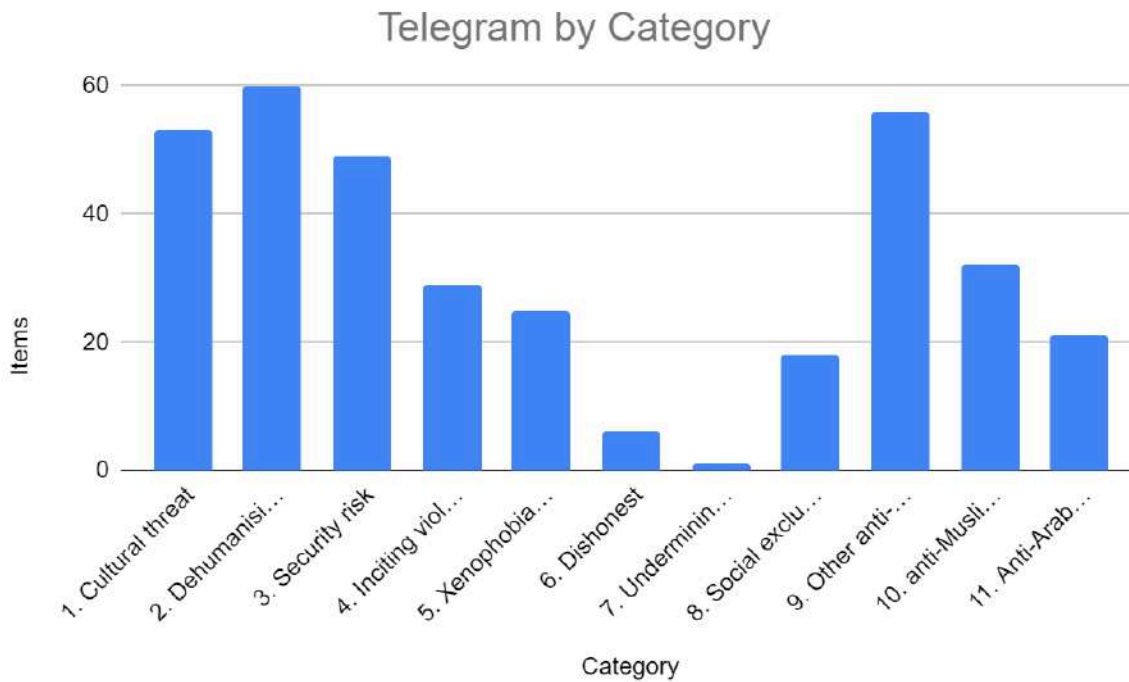
Examples from Telegram

Item #401 (removed)

This item shows multiple people dehumanising Palestinians and calling for violence against them. The first comment calls for the elimination of the Gazan population, compares them to animals, and says the violence should start with the most vulnerable, while the reply makes a misogynistic reference to Gazan women.

Item #4007 (online)

This item contains an AI generated image of rows of women wearing burqa, with a sign captioning them as a 'baby factiory' (sic) while the front row is pushing trolleys with babies. The AI image contains numerous distortions, adding an unsettling effect to the dehumanisation of Muslim women as only a means to produce more Muslims. Meanwhile, the text under the image portrays all Muslims as a threat to other countries.

Item #3774 (removed)

X (formerly Twitter)

███████████████████████ on X

English patriots mobilize against the invasion of Muslim garbage who raped and mistreated They should have spoken up sooner. I hope it's not too late!...

Tommy Robinson

English patriots mobilize against the invasion of Muslim garbage who raped and mistreated They should have spoken up sooner. I hope it's not too late!

channel ███████████ ➡️ ████████ 👁 276 2:20 PM

This item forwards a message from a known English far right campaigner against Islam, dehumanising Muslims with its depiction of them, and portraying them as a threat to the security of England which should be resisted with violence.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking social media platform aimed at businesses, employers and employees. It is owned by Microsoft. In Australia 17% of the adult population use LinkedIn,[30] which is around 3.4 million people.[31] LinkedIn was most recently reported as having 45 million active logged in users a month within the EU.[32]

LinkedIn allows business and employees to create profiles to share their experience and current Jobs. Users can also make and share posts, including text, images and video. LinkedIn also has the ability for users to create or join groups. Until fairly recently LinkedIn was somewhat protected by its culture and professional focus which limited the risk of hate speech, but changes to the platform and society demonstrate the need for an increased focus in Trust and Safety by the platform.

In total there were 67 items collected from LinkedIn. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 129 categorisations, an average of 1.9 categories per item. 49% presented Muslims as a security risk, and 45% as a cultural threat. There were elements classified as other forms of anti-Muslim hate in 25% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	30	45%
2. Dehumanising	22	33%
3. Security risk	33	49%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	0	0%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	10	15%
6. Dishonest	5	7%
7. Undermining allies	1	1%
8. Social exclusion	5	7%
9. Other anti-Muslim	17	25%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	2	3%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	4	6%

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[30] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
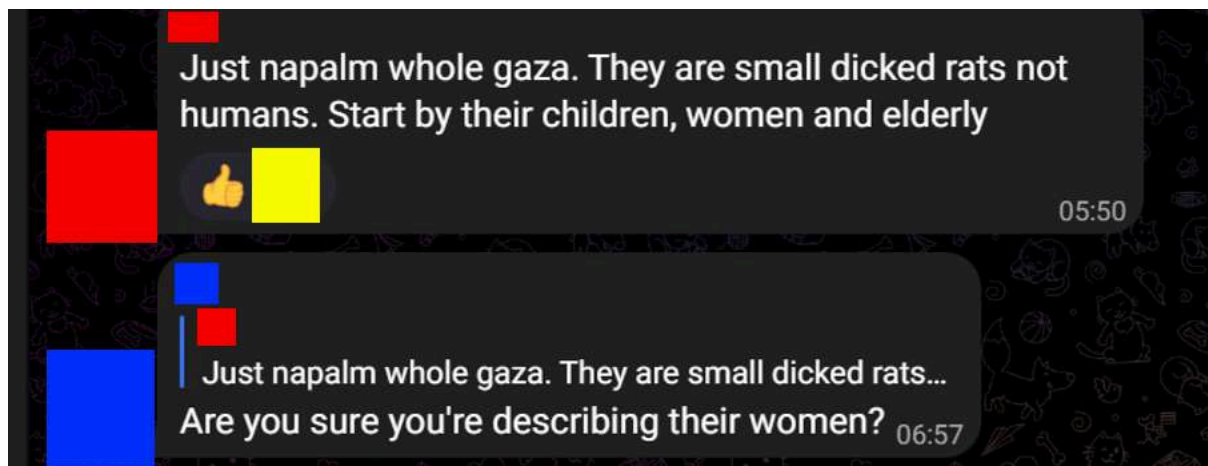[31] Based adult population data from: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[32] *Digital Services Act Transparency Report* (LinkedIn Ireland Unlimited Company, October 2023) 1. https://content.linkedin.com/content/dam/help/linkedin/en-us/October-2023-LinkedIn-DSA-Transparency-Report10.pdf

Graph 15

LinkedIn by Category
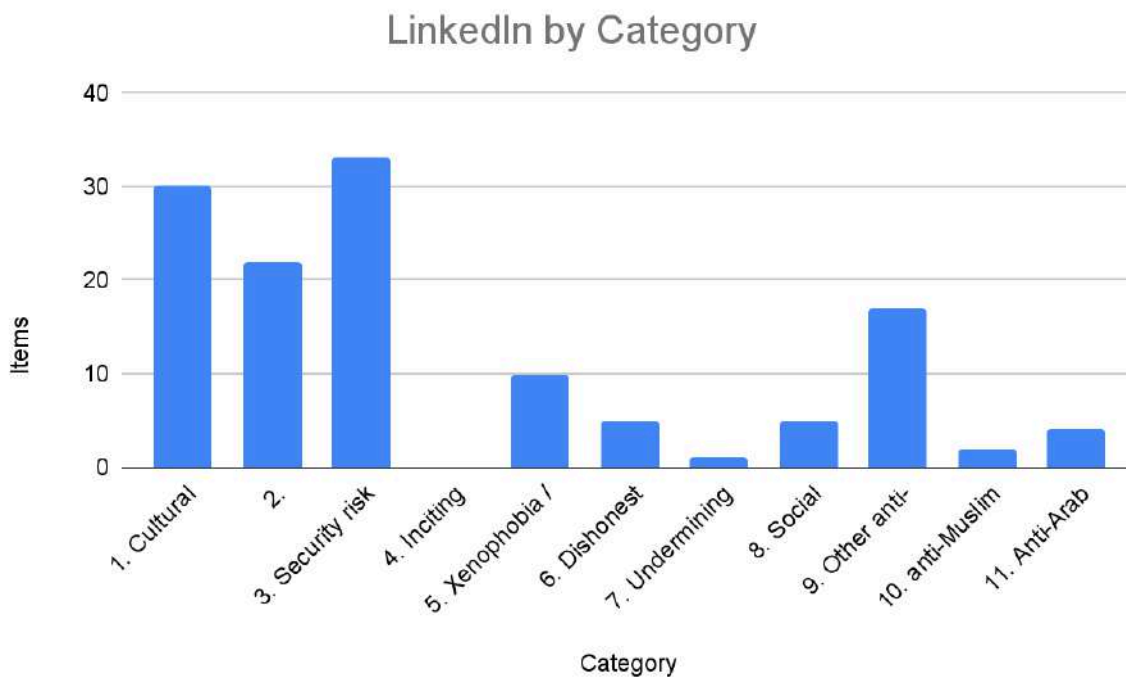
Examples from LinkedIn

Item #3557 (removed)

Absolutely a religion of piece after the shout wallhalla they just press a button & 💣💣💣💥💥💥💥 ka boom a piece here a piece there hence religion of piece, there a spelling mistake in the word piece

Like | Reply

This item attempts to be humorous in describing Islam as a terroristic threat.

Item #3955 (online)

This cartoon characterises Muslims as a threat to the security of the U.S. The word terrorism apparently written in blood across the map while the 'river to the sea' message is changed to 'From the Atlantic to the Pacific' implies that the presence of Muslims would result in a war within the U.S. Meanwhile the 'Support Open Borders' sign has an anti-immigration message suggesting that immigrants would be terrorists.

Item #3956 (removed)
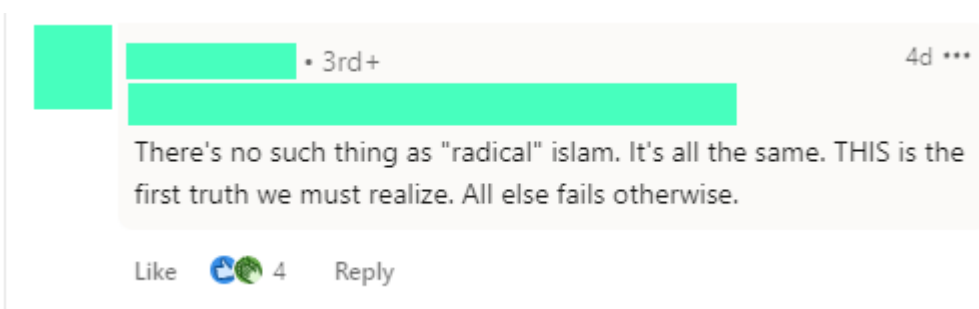
This comment demonises all Muslims as "radical", with the implication that radical Islam is a threat to society.

Gab

Gab is, from a technical perspective, a microblogging social media platform with traditional social networking features. It is owned by Andrew Torba, a self described Christian Nationalist and a conspiracy theorist.[33] The site has been linked to the radicalisation of the person behind the deadly attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018,[34] and the January 6th Insurrection in 2021 at the US Capitol.[35]

Gab promotes itself as a free speech platform, but unlike other platforms that use this label, Gab's terms of service seek to only ban content that is unlawful in the United States. The terms of service explicitly permitted hate on the platform so long as it is within the scope of the First Amendment.[36] Gab has previously been linked to anti-Muslim hate by the German Marshall Fund in 2019. Researchers there found that Gab played an "integral role.. in spreading harmful and defamatory content to larger publics on Facebook, Reddit, YouTube, and Twitter" .[37] YouTube, followed by Twitter (now X) were the most common linked sites in a sample of content about Muslims, Gab served as an external way to share anti-Muslim hate on those platforms and direct traffic to it. They warned that "fringe platforms including Gab are important to watch as they will likely… be instrumental to the spread of Islamophobia online, and to the ecosystem of political divisiveness and manipulation more broadly".[38]

There are approximately 74,000 Australian Gab users,[39] which is about 0.37% of the Australian adult population.[40] Gab claims to have a total of five million users.[41] Gab has very similar features to X (Twitter), with users being able to publish posts including text, images and video. Users can also join groups.

In total there were 159 items collected from Gab. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 335 categorisations, an average of 2.1 categories per item. 49% of

[33] Tess Owen, "Gab Founder Andrew Torba Wants to Build a Christian Nationalist Internet", *Vice,* 30 September 2022.
https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxnpz5/gab-andrew-torba-christian-nationalist

[34] Brian Stelter and Paul P. Murphy, "What's Gab, the social platform used by the Pittsburgh shooting suspect?", *CNN,* 27 October 2018.
https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/27/tech/gab-robert-bowers/index.html

[35] Bobby Allyn, "Social Media Site Gab Is Surging, Even As Critics Blame It For Capitol Violence", *NPR*, 17 January 2021.
https://www.npr.org/2021/01/17/957512634/social-media-site-gab-is-surging-even-as-critics-blame-it-for-capitol-violence

[36] "Racism on X, Gab & TikTok", *Online Hate Prevention Institute*, 26 July 2024.
https://ohpi.org.au/racism-on-x-gab-tiktok/

[37] Samuel Woolley *et al,* "Incubating Hate: Islamophobia and Gab", *German Marshall Fund & Institute for the Future*, 2019, 1. https://www.gmfus.org/news/incubating-hate-islamophobia-and-gab

[38] Ibid, 2.

[39] M. Peucker, "Demarcating Australia's far right: Political fringe but social mainstream?", Periscope Australia: A new wave? (volume 2), 12-23, June 2023.
https://periscopekasaustralia.com.au/papers/volume-10-2-2023/demarcating-australias-far-right-political-fringe-but-social-mainstream/

[40] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid.
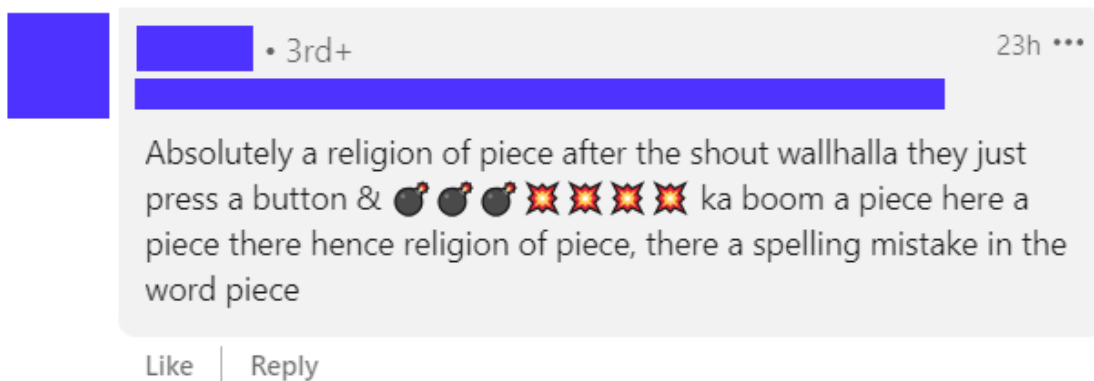
[41] Mira Fox, "This social media site is ready to fund a Christian nationalist America", *The Forward*, 14 October 2022.
https://forward.com/culture/521336/gab-gabpay-paypal-andrew-torba-christian-nationalist/

the items represented Muslims as a cultural threat and 39% involved demonisation or dehumanisation. Elements classified as "other" anti-Muslim hate were in 38% of items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	60	38%
2. Dehumanising	51	32%
3. Security risk	46	29%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	22	14%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	39	25%
6. Dishonest	16	10%
7. Undermining allies	2	1%
8. Social exclusion	19	12%
9. Other anti-Muslim	60	38%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	7	4%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	13	8%

Graph 16

Gab by Category
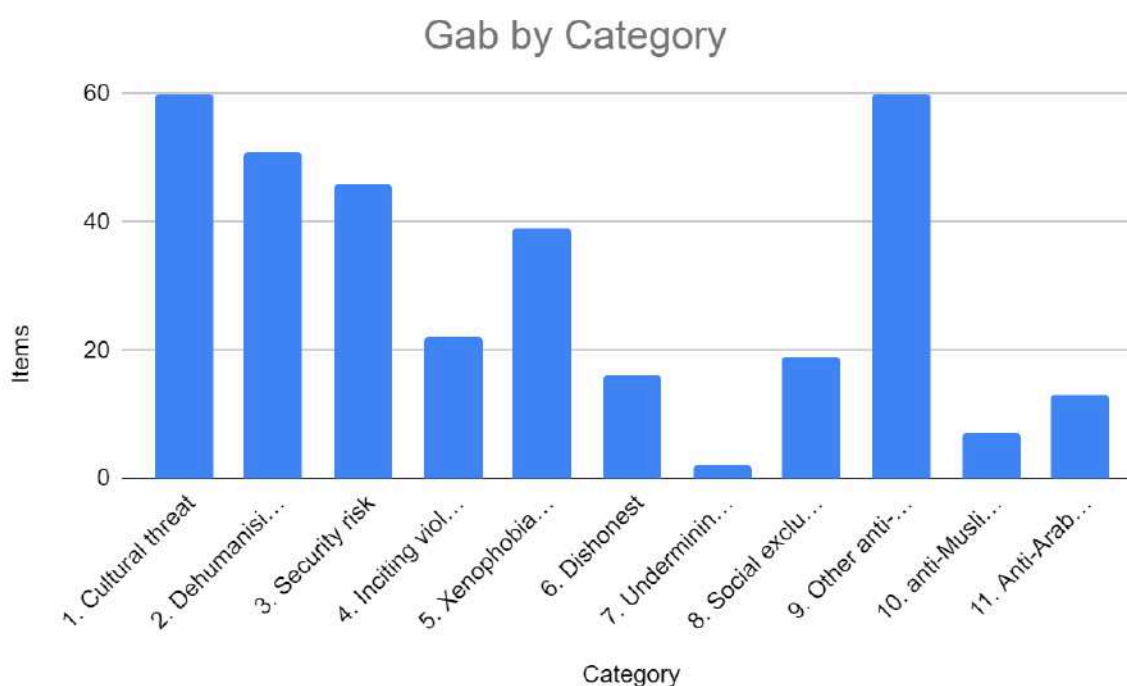
Examples from Gab

Item #411 (online)

These items oppose the existence of Palestinians. The first calls for violence against Gazans, justifying it with demonisation of Muslims as terrorists. The second calls to vote against politicians and parties that have expressed support for Palestinians.

Item #1339 (online)

This post forwards an anti-immigration article that characterises Muslims as uniquely threatening to the security and culture of western countries. The poster has added their own comment demonising Islam as a religion for mentally ill people.

Item #3977 (online)

I was in the quiet room at work...

And a barefoot Muslim came in with his rug, and started bowing. I was not happy. Then I went to the caf and it was just loud negroes and middle easterners.

The niggers were literally chucking basketballs across the entire hall at each other. And this a very high brow, white collar company. All the new hires are brown because of dei law. This cannot continue.

Pols who implement anti white dei must be held responsible in the most severe way possible

👍 7   4 replies

This post starts by rejecting the presence of a Muslim praying in the workplace, then continues to express racism against other non-white groups. The final line about holding politicians responsible could be interpreted as a threat against politicians who support anti-discrimination laws.

Reddit

Reddit is a discussion website that allows users to submit content to niche communities. In Australia 13% of the adult population use Reddit,[42] which is around 2.6 million people.[43] There are 12.8 million users of Reddit inside the European Union.[44] Reddit allows users to post content, including text, images, videos and links to communities, called subreddits. Posts can be upvoted or downvoted by other users, and can be commented on. Communities have moderators that can allow or disallow posts and comments based on the subreddits rules. There are site-wide content rules as a catch-all.

In total there were 91 items collected from Reddit. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 146 categorisations, an average of 1.6 categories per item. 32% of the items on Facebook represented Muslims as a cultural threat, while 25% involved demonisation or dehumanisation. 43% involved some element categorised as "other".

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	29	32%
2. Dehumanising	23	25%
3. Security risk	14	15%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	6	7%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	4	4%
6. Dishonest	7	8%
7. Undermining allies	1	1%
8. Social exclusion	10	11%
9. Other anti-Muslim	39	43%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	9	10%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	4	4%

[42] Park *et al*, *Digital news report: Australia 2024* (News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra, 2024) 95. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024-06/apo-nid326816_4.pdf
[43] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[44] https://support.reddithelp.com/hc/en-us/articles/23595536875796-Digital-Services-Act-DSA-Information-for-EU-users Seen 9 March 2024.

Graph 17

Reddit by Category
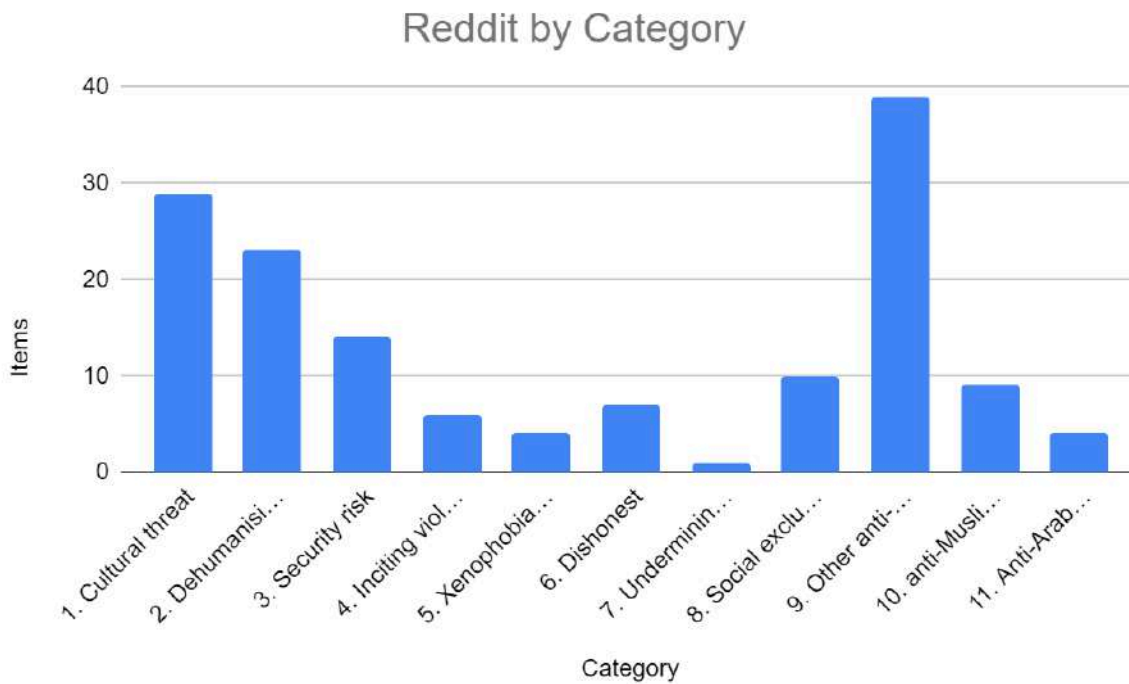
Examples from Reddit

Item #3119 (online)

This comment dehumanises Muslims by saying that Islam requires people to not think.

Item #4009 (online)

This post dehumanises Muslims by calling Islam a mental issue, with a reply agreeing with that take.

Item #3627 (online)

This post attempts to say that the only true Albanians are Catholics, while denigrating all other religious Albanian groups, particularly Muslims. The title is a slur for Muslims, and the post starts by dehumanising Muslims as brainwashed. The post again returns to Muslim families as a cultural threat by being too secular, and then later again uses another slur to dehumanise Muslims as submissive to Communist rule while real Albanians resisted.

BitChute

Bitchute is a video hosting and viewing service similar to YouTube. BitChute is based in the UK.[45] 4.94% of the traffic on BitChute (13.8 million users in June 2024) comes from Australia,[46] which would be 68,000 people or 0.34% of the Australian adult population if all the users were adults (which is unlikely).[47] Bitchute allows users to upload and view videos, and comment on them. The platform blocks content in the UK and Europe if reported, but does not delete it, and advertises proxies to work around the blocks it puts in place to meet legal requirements.[48]

In total there were 96 items collected from BitChute. These items were placed into one or more categories resulting in 186 categorisations, an average of 1.9 categories per item. 47% of the items present Muslims as a cultural threat, and 36% demonise or dehumanise Muslims. Content with elements falling into "other" accounted for only 4% of the items.

Category	Items	%
1. Cultural threat	45	47%
2. Dehumanising	35	36%
3. Security risk	23	24%
4. Inciting violence against Muslims	10	10%
5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee	24	25%
6. Dishonest	6	6%
7. Undermining allies	1	1%
8. Social exclusion	9	9%
9. Other anti-Muslim	23	24%
10. anti-Muslim jokes	4	4%
11. Anti-Arab Racism	6	6%

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[45] Milo Trujillo *et al*, "What is BitChute? Characterizing the 'Free Speech' Alternative to YouTube", *arXiv*, 2004). https://arxiv.org/abs/2004.01984
[46] Based on traffic analysis from: https://www.similarweb.com/website/bitchute.com/#traffic Seen 29 July 2024.
[47] Based on adult population data: "Population clock and pyramid", *Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Seen 28 July 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-clock-pyramid
[48] M Trujillo *et al*, *What is BitChute? Characterizing the 'Free Speech' Alternative to YouTube* (arXiv, 2004). https://arxiv.org/abs/2004.01984

Graph 18
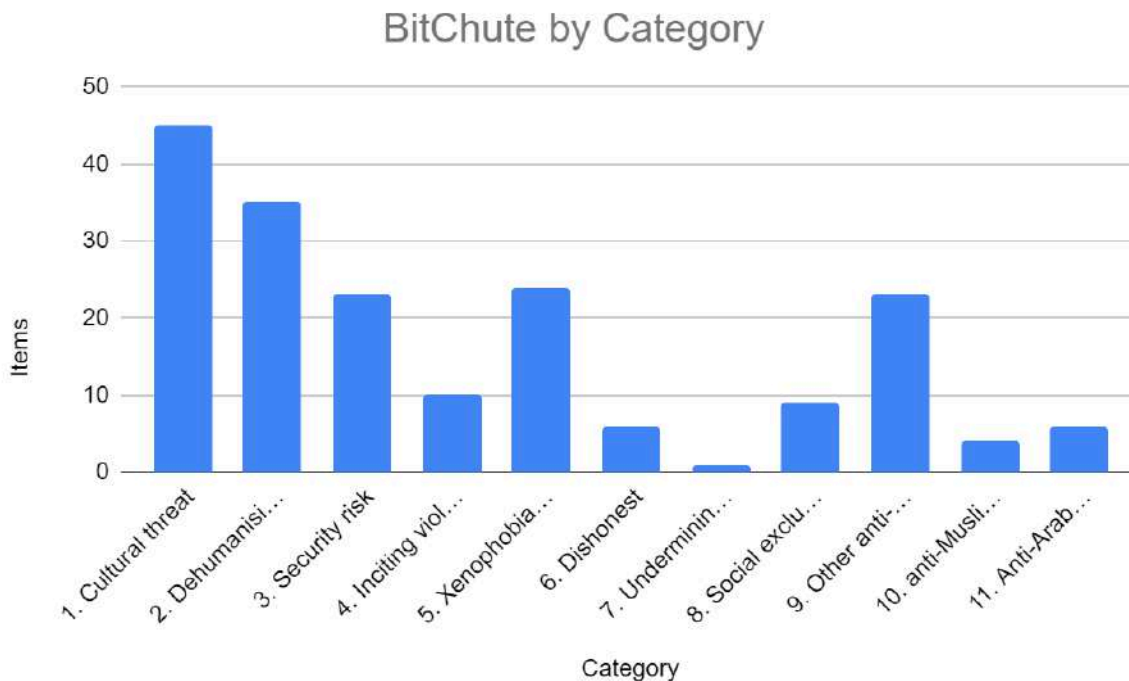
Examples from BitChute

Item #2549 (online)
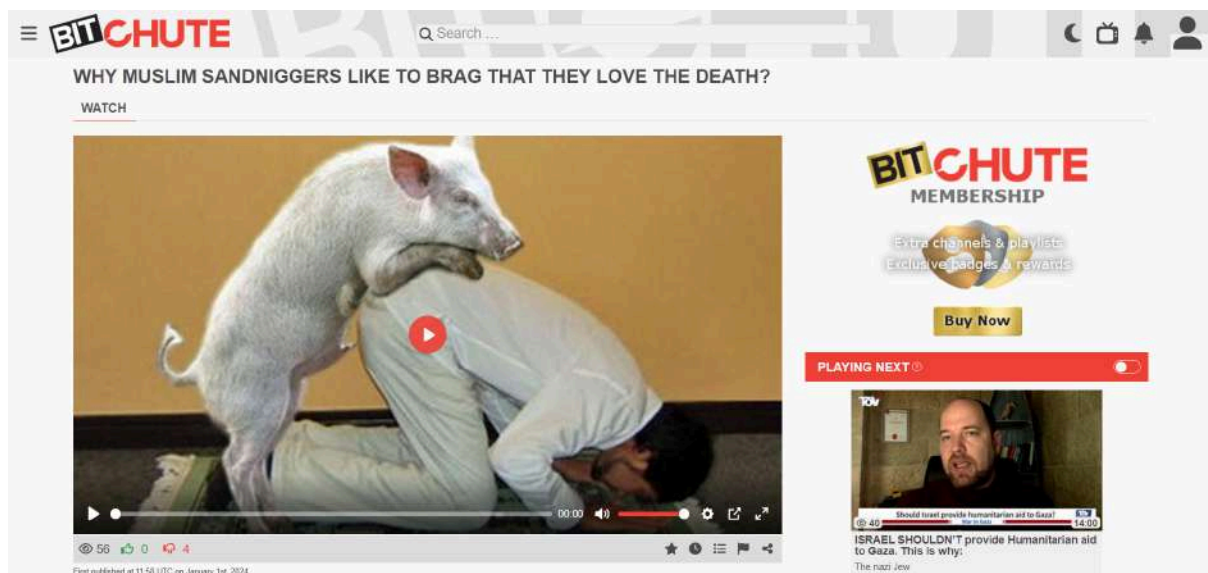
This video is titled with a racial slur for Middle-Eastern people, and has an offensive thumbnail image including a praying Muslim. The video describes Palestinians as cowardly and violent against the weak, dehumanising all Palestinians. It also excludes Palestinians from global society by saying they have been rejected by other Arab nations and that western nations should do the same.

Item #1368 (online)

This video description dehumanises Muslims by claiming they are all sex offenders. The #immigration tag in the video description adds xenophobic intent to posting the video. One comment then calls for violence, dehumanising by referring to 'it'. The other comment refers to 'another monkey', again dehumanising Muslims.

Item #3666 (online)

This video is titled with an anti-Arab slur, and celebrates Trump violating cultural norms in Saudi Arabia, implying that their culture is inferior.

Hate by category

In this section of the report we look at each category of anti-Muslim hate and racism and how prevalent they are on different platforms. We show examples from each platform for each category. The examples appear with their item number (*e.g. #545*) within our sample set which facilitates follow up on a specific example. For example, if the reader would like to send us a query as to whether content has been removed by the platform, they can do so by contacting us and quoting the example's item number.

Also as previously discussed and presented in *graph 4* (repeated here as graph 6), each platform has its own spread of hate between the categories. While categories 1, 2, 3 and 9 are consistently high, other categories may be high on one platform but low on another.

Graph 19

Items of hate on each platform by type

Legend: 1. Cultural threat; 2. Dehumanising; 3. Security risk; 4. Inciting violence against Muslims; 5. Xenophobia / anti-refugee; 6. Dishonest; 7. Undermining allies; 8. Social exclusion; 9. Other anti-Muslim; 10. anti-Muslim jokes; 11. Anti-Arab Racism
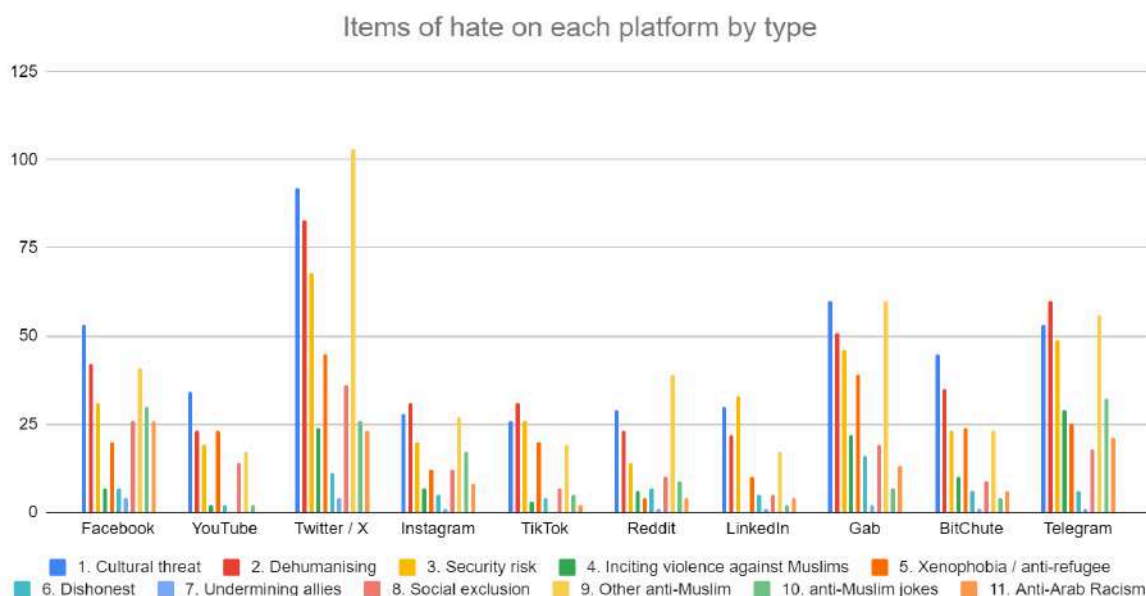
Muslims as a cultural threat

This category includes items that imply that the local or national culture, or "our way of life" is threatened by the presence of a Muslim community. Content of this type often suggests that Muslims want to impose Sharia Law and limit the freedom of others, are trying to cause an "Islamification" or "Islamisation" of society, or want to "take-over" either through immigration or through high birth rates leading to a demographic shift in the makeup of the population.

This was one of the most frequently occurring categories and 33% of all the data collected across all platforms falls within this category. Data from YouTube (50%), Facebook (49%), BitChute (47%), and LinkedIn (45%) was more likely to use this category of anti-Muslim hate. Data from Reddit (32%), TikTok (33%), Telegraph (34%), Instagram (35%) and X (Twitter)(35%) was a little less likely to use this type of hate.

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	53	49%
YouTube	34	50%
Twitter / X	92	35%
Instagram	28	35%
TikTok	26	33%
Reddit	29	32%
LinkedIn	30	45%
Gab	60	38%
BitChute	45	47%
Telegram	53	34%

This graph shows the absolute number of items presenting Muslims as a cultural threat that came from each platform.

Graph 20
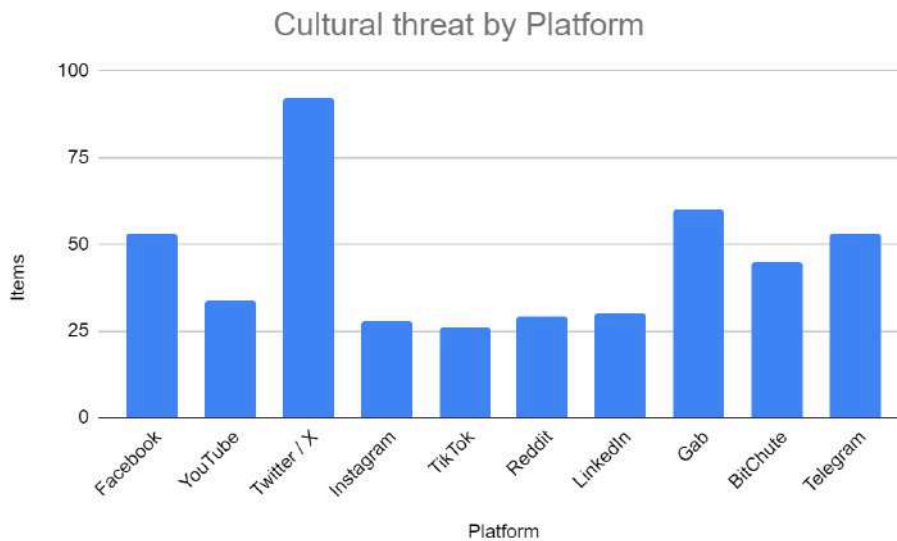
Cultural threat by Platform

The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that presents Muslims as a cultural threat.

Graph 21

Cultural threat as a percent of the data from each platform

61
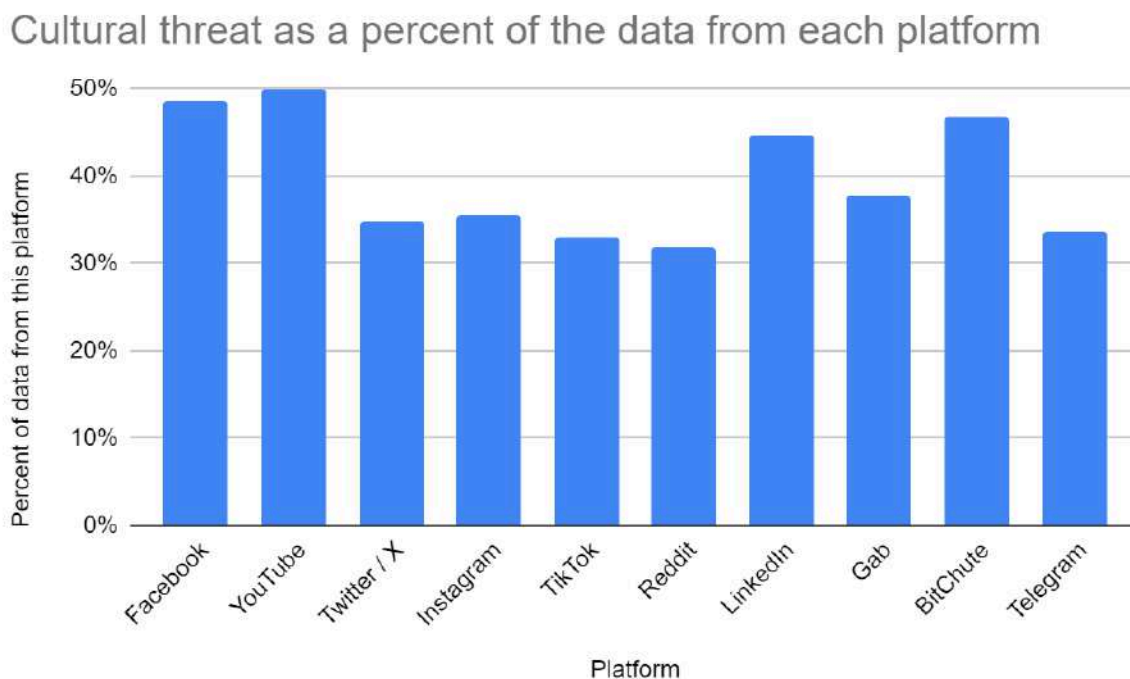
Examples of Muslims as a cultural threat

Item #3099 from Instagram (online)

This example from Instagram shows the categorization of Muslims as a cultural threat. This is a comment in response to another comment on a video post on Instagram. The video and previous comment demonise muslims and muslims immigrants to the UK. This comment specifically says not only that Muslims are a cultural threat, but "Islam destroys culture. Period." This comment also fits the category of Demonising/Dehumanizing Muslims as it refers to Muslims as "spreading like rabbits" in a pest-like fashion. This "spreading" also contributes to the perceived cultural threat, as this is what the post attributes to the perceived destruction of Indian culture.

Item #3925 from YouTube (online)

ISLAM's EVIL PLANS FOR THE UK

4 subscribers   Subscribe

🖒 0   👎   ⮞ Share   ⥅ Save   ⋯

No views Feb 4, 2024
The imam is stating the rulings of the quran in surah 9 vs 29-30, surah 47 vs 4, surah 8 vs 12 and many other killing verses in the quran which is applicable in the sharia law

Transcript

Follow along using the transcript.

Show transcript

4 subscribers

This video from Youtube is an example of the categorization of Muslims as a cultural threat. The video title is "ISLAM's EVIL PLANS FOR THE UK" and is a short clip of two commentators reacting to an Imam's lecture on sharia law. The commentators' reaction, the title and description of the video make it seem that all muslims want to impose sharia law on the UK. The notion of sharia law as presented in the post, and the characterization of Islam and its supposed plan as evil conveys the idea that Muslims are a threat to the United Kingdom's culture and way of life. This post also falls into the categories of Muslims as a security risk and demonization/dehumanising muslims.

Item #3784 from Telegram (online)

00:18 🔇

🇦🇺 Melbourne has lost its identity.

The city of Melbourne has been FLOODED with millions of third worlders, totally changing its makeup and culture.

Melbourne is now majority non-native born with a White population that is rapidly approaching less than 50%.

Do you think Australians support this change?

Do you remember voting for this?

We sure don't.

Join us: ███████████

😡 96   🧑 22   ❤️ 1   😅 1   ⚡ 1   👁 6276 edited 10:10 AM

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12az9Rv85SevVJkJ8zLSxN6ffQ-cVW5QG/view

This post on Telegram shows a video of Muslims engaging in public prayer. The caption claims that "Melbourne has been FLOODED with millions of third worlders, totally changing its makeup and culture". The post also implies that Muslim immigrants are starting to outnumber those who were born in Australia. This suggests that the Muslim population has begun to change the culture of Australia, and implies that most Australians are against this change. This post therefore portrays Muslims as a threat to the Australian culture and way of life.

Demonising or dehumanising Muslims

The category involves two different forms of seeking to separate Muslims from the rest of humanity. The first form involves demonisation of Muslims, which usually involves calling them collectively evil, criminal-minded or immoral, but can involve literally presenting them as the devil or the devil's tools. Dehumanisation seeks to take away their humanity by comparing them to animals, insects, vermin or as sub-humans. The purpose of both approaches is to suggest that Muslims are lesser or different from normal human beings, and therefore do not deserve equal treatment and protection.

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	42	39%
YouTube	23	34%
Twitter / X	83	31%
Instagram	31	39%
TikTok	31	39%
Reddit	23	25%
LinkedIn	22	33%
Gab	51	32%
BitChute	35	36%
Telegram	60	38%

This graph shows the absolute number of items involving anti-Muslim demonisation or dehumanisation from each platform.

Graph 22
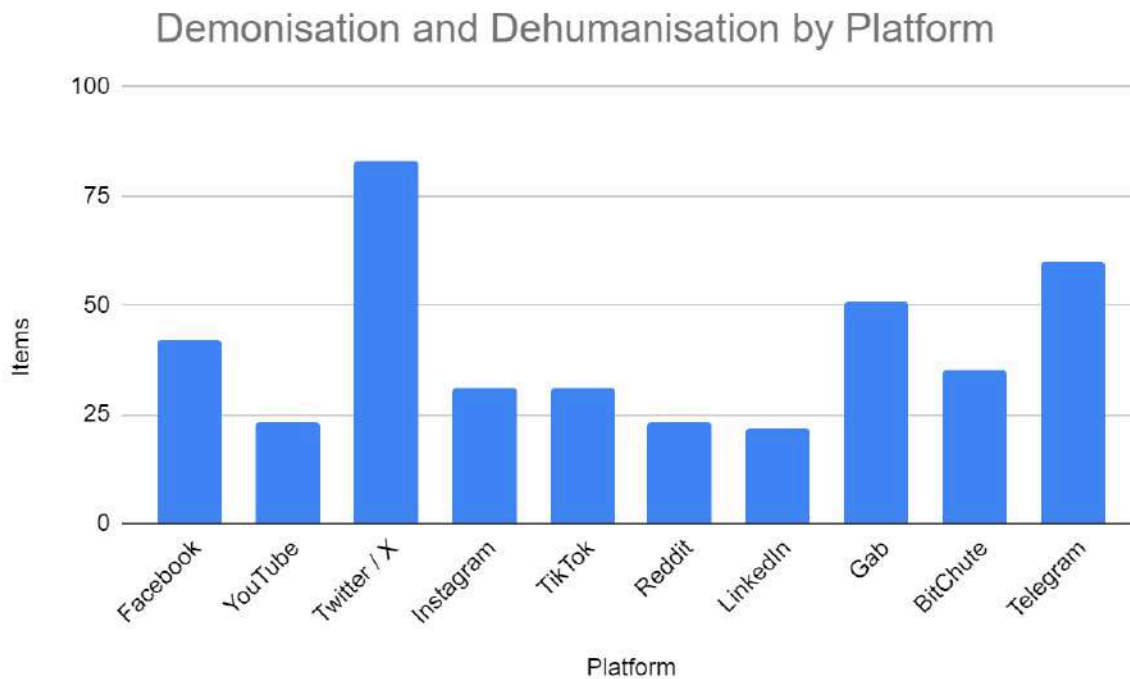
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involves anti-Muslim demonisation or dehumanisation.

Graph 23

Examples of anti-Muslim demonisation or dehumanisation

Item #2506 from X (online)[49]

Goatfuckers cannot control themselves when they see a woman.

· Jan 12

Replying to

A video of Ahmed trying to protect Fouz in the midst of thirsty men. It's disheartening to see them acting like wild animals instead of treating Fouz with respect just because she's not wearing an Abaya!

0:00 / 0:16

5:57 AM · Jan 14, 2024 · **321** Views

Here we see the demonization and dehumanisation of Muslims on X. The post re-shares a video of a woman being led through a crowd, with a man protecting her from the crowd. The re-shared post text states that "Goatfuckers cannot control themselves when they see a woman". The term Goatfuckers is both derogatory and dehumanising to Muslims and Arabs. The remark that Muslim men cannot control themselves around women implies that they are less than human or animalistic. The combination of language and imputation results in demonization of Muslims as a whole.

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[49] While the video that was shared has been removed by X, the message by the person sharing it is still online

Item #519 from TikTok (online)
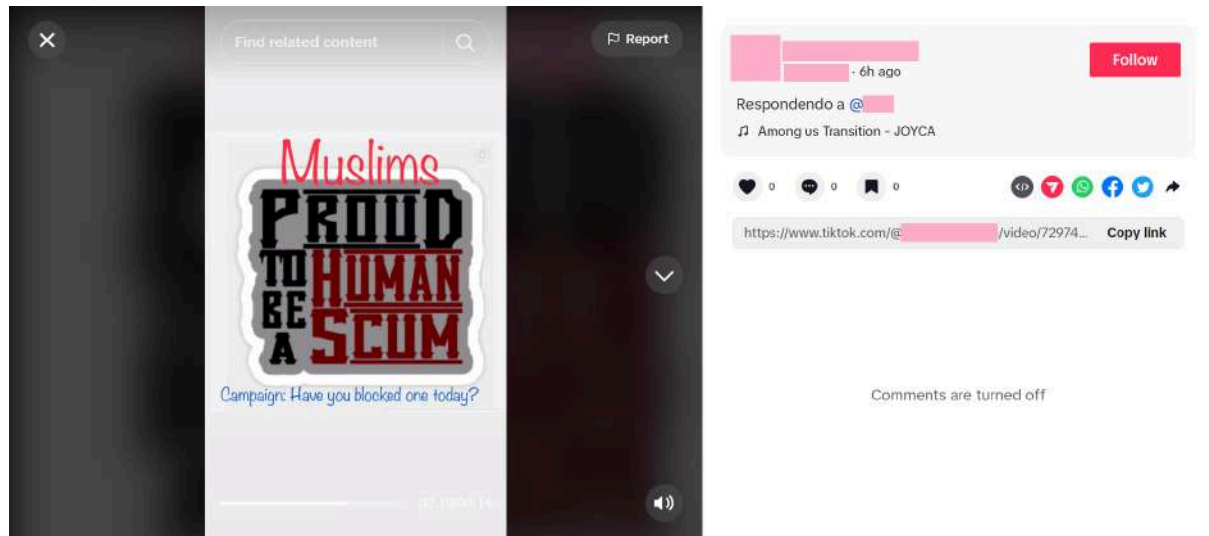
In this item from Tiktok we can see the classification of demonising/dehumanising Muslims. The post includes a still image of the text: "Muslims Proud to be a Human Scum. Campaign: Have you blocked one today?". The image has a backing soundtrack including music, the sound of a gun cocking then firing, and swords clashing, which could be perceived as violent and threatening. The text calls Muslims "Human Scum", which certainly demonises muslims as well as dehumanises them. The text ends with the call to block muslims with "Have you blocked one today?". This dehumanises muslims by flattening Muslim people into only their Muslim identity, and demonises them by calling on the post viewer to block them. This post also falls into the category of socially excluding muslims.
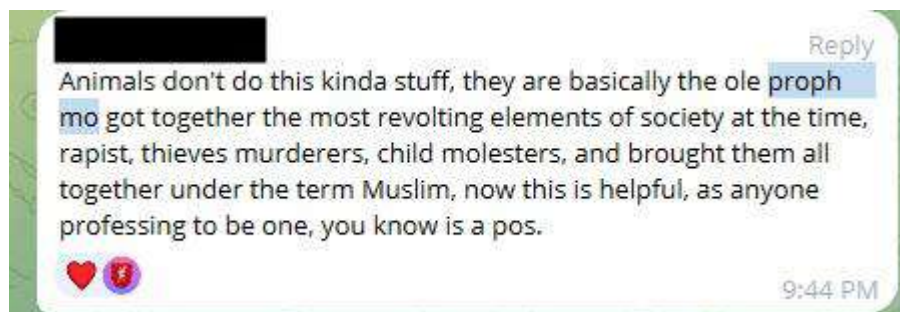
Item 3743 from Telegram (online)

This post on Telegram references "proph mo" (i.e the Prophet Mohammad, a central figure in Islam) and suggests that Muslims are all "rapists, thieves murderers, child molesters". This post also says anyone who claims to be a Muslim is a "pos" (i.e piece of shit). This post therefore demonises Muslims by claiming they are all violent criminals, and refers to them using degrading terminology which dehumanises them.
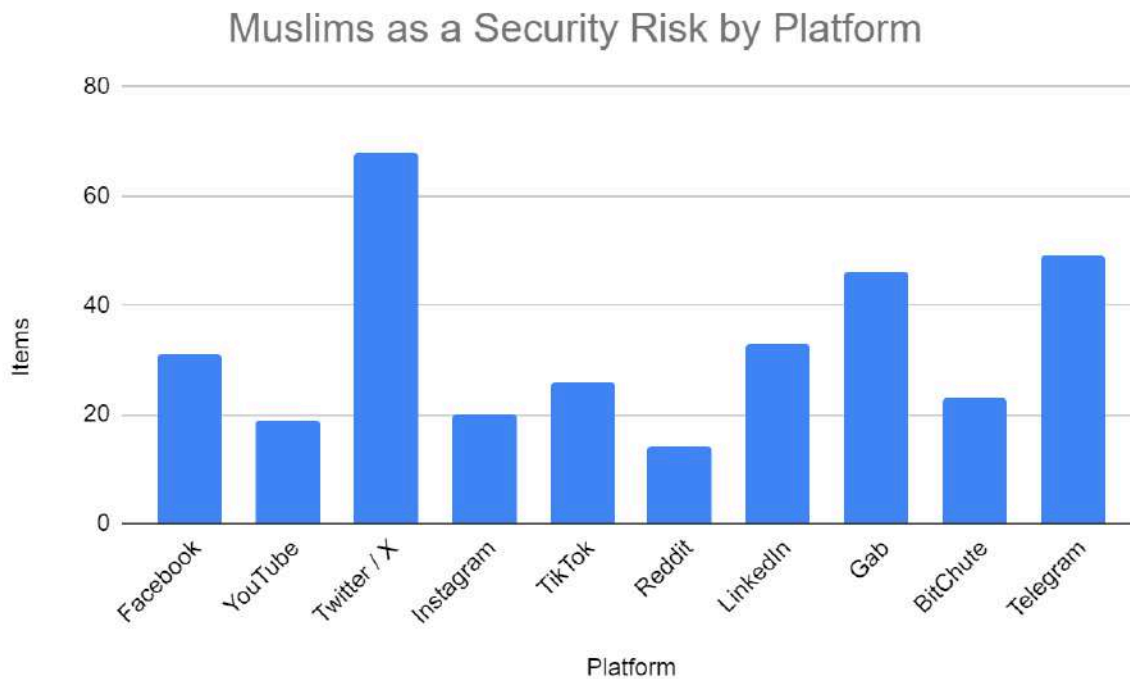
Muslims as a security risk

Content in this category implies that all Muslims are terrorists, criminals, or a security threat. This is a common form of anti-Muslim hate on social media. Variations in this category include the idea all Muslims are terrorists, or otherwise support and aid terrorism, that all Muslims are violent and involved in crime, often with reference to violent crime, particularly sexual violence. This narrative is designed to promote fear of Muslims in others.

This was the third most frequently occurring category of anti-Muslim hate overall and 28% of all the data collected across all platforms falls within this category. It more common, compared to other anti-Muslim hate narratives, on LinkedIn where almost half (49%) of all our data involved this category. On TikTok a third (33%) of the anti-Muslim hate uses narratives within this category. It is far less frequently encountered in the data from Reddit where only 15% of the anti-Muslim hate involved this category.

| Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	31	28%
YouTube	19	28%
Twitter / X	68	26%
Instagram	20	25%
TikTok	26	33%
Reddit	14	15%
LinkedIn	33	49%
Gab	46	29%
BitChute	23	24%
Telegram	49	31%

This graph shows the absolute number of items presenting Muslims as a cultural threat that came from each platform.

Graph 24

Muslims as a Security Risk by Platform

The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that presents Muslims as a cultural threat.

Graph 25

Content presenting Muslims as a security risk as a percent of the data from each platform
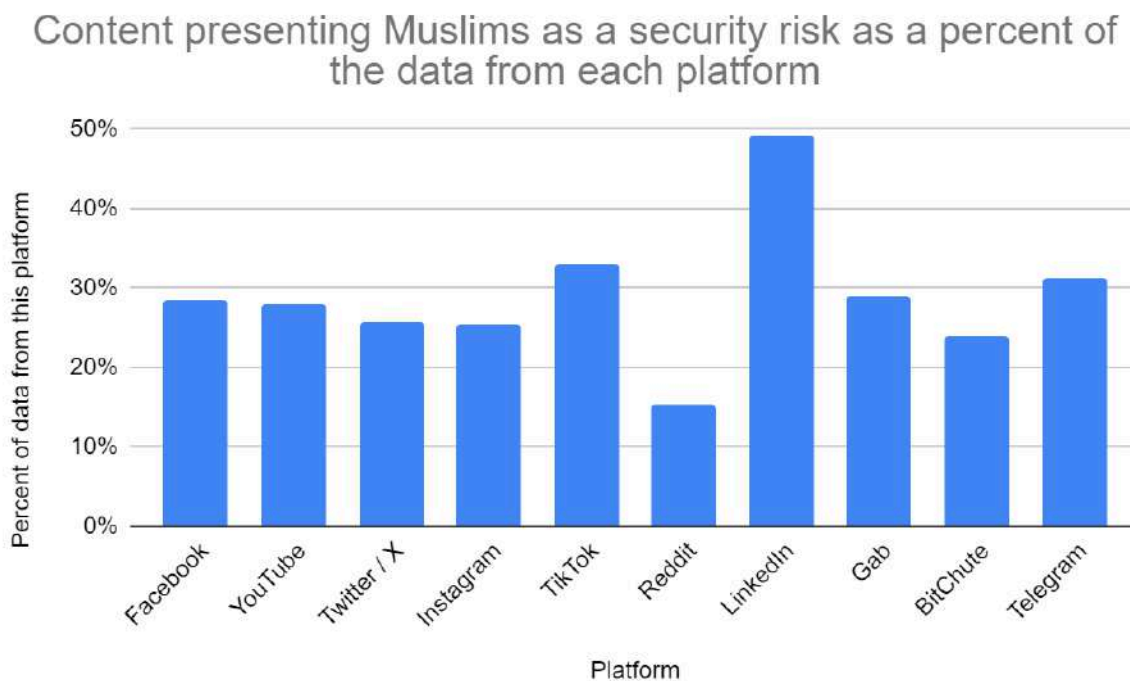
Examples of presenting Muslims as a security risk

Item #4025, from LinkedIn (online)

This example from LinkedIn shows Muslims as a security risk. The post contains an image with a large wooden dove (including an olive branch in its mouth), with Hamas fighters inside, a blatant take on the trojan horse story. The dove is draped in a Palestinian flag and supporters of Palestine wave flags around the Trojan Dove. The scene takes place in front of the Eiffel Tower. The text of the post reads "WAKE UP!, behind the Palestinian "struggle" hides terrorism". The main idea communicated by this imagery is that a Palestinian/Muslim cause is really about terrorism, and that the West is not safe from muslim terrorists. This post also fits the categories of Muslims as dishonest, muslims as a cultural threat and Undermining Muslim allies

.

Item #3873, from Reddit (online)

r/theworldnews • 2 days ago

Bomb found near Israeli embassy in Sweden

jns.org   Open

⬆ 148 ⬇   💬 86   ↑ Share

Single comment thread ——————————————— See full discussion

• 2d ago

How do you say Allah Akbarr in Swedish?

⊖ ⬆ 35 ⬇   💬 Reply   ↑ Share   ...

In this comment on a Reddit post, we see the category of Muslims as a Security Risk. The comment is in response to an article posted to the World News subreddit, where a bomb was found near the Israeli embassy in Sweden. The comment: "How do you say Allah Akbarr in Swedish?" is posted in response. The linked article does not attribute a perpetrator or a motive to this particular incident. The article does discuss other terrorist attacks against Israeli embassies around the world and mentions two attacks perpetrated by both right-wing extremists and Islamic extremists. This reddit comment is asserting that this incident was perpetrated by Muslims without evidence or reason. The phrase "Allah Akbar" (God is Great) is central to Islamic faith and prayer. There is no attempt by the commentator to separate Islamic Extremism from the average Muslim person, and by doing so promotes the idea that all Muslims are a security threat.

Item #3800 from Gab (removed)

ANN COULTER: Which Kills More American Citizens—Islam Overseas, Or Immigration Here At Home?

vdare.com/articles/ann-coulter-which-kills-mo...

ANN COULTER: Which Kills More American Citizens—Islam Overseas, Or Immigration Here At Home? | Articles

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-bOhpZsW7yohEOAssoFI1ZulbXUAGE26/view

This post on Gab shares a news article with the title "Which Kills More American Citizens–Islam Overseas or Immigration Here At Home?". In the article, Coulter argues that immigrants in America are a serious threat to national security (more of a threat than "Islamic threats in Islamic lands"). The article claims that immigrants are responsible for a high number of American deaths. Coulter references "terrorists [...] behaving like terrorists" and "Muslim immigrants murdering 3,000 Americans under George W. Bush". The article suggests that "mass deportations" and "a gigantic wall" are the only potential solutions to this problem. This post on Gab, which links to Coulter's article, therefore supports the idea that Muslims are violent extremists who pose a risk to America's national security. This post therefore portrays Muslims as a security risk.

Inciting anti-Muslim violence

This category involves content that invites violence against Muslims. The target could be a person, or their property, targeted because of the potential victims' Muslim faith. This sort of hate can also target Muslims in general, advocating violence against any Muslim, or against all Muslims. It can also include justifying violence that has occurred to Muslims, or promoting the idea of violence towards Muslims as acceptable or justified. Also included in this category is content calling for genocide against Muslims, or the elimination (for example by nuclear attacks) of a country on the basis of it being a Muslim majority country.

This category is less common, and more strongly moderated by mainstream platforms, but it is also the most serious form of anti-Muslim hate as it advocates direct harm and can feed into violent extremism that targets Muslims. The devastating result of such extremism was seen in the Christchurch attack of 2019.

Telegram, the encrypted messaging app, was responsible for more items inciting violence (29 items) than any other platform. It was followed by Twitter (24 items) and Gab (22 items). The absolute numbers are concerning. Also concerning is that this content made up 18% of the content from Telegram and 14% of the content from Gab. On X (Twitter) and Instagram it was 9% which is still concerning, but significantly lower. This suggests the level of radicalisation on Telegram and Gab is far higher, and the risk of anti-Muslim hate on these platforms turning into real world violence is higher. A further analysis of this category, for both anti-Muslim hate and antisemitism, as it relates to these alternative technology platforms, is available on the Online Hate Prevention Institute website.[50]

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	7	6%
YouTube	2	3%
Twitter / X	24	9%
Instagram	7	9%
TikTok	3	4%
Reddit	6	7%
LinkedIn	0	0%
Gab	22	14%
BitChute	10	10%
Telegram	29	18%

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[50] "Right wing extremism in 2024", *Online Hate Prevention Institute*, 26 May 2024. https://ohpi.org.au/right-wing-extremism-in-2024/
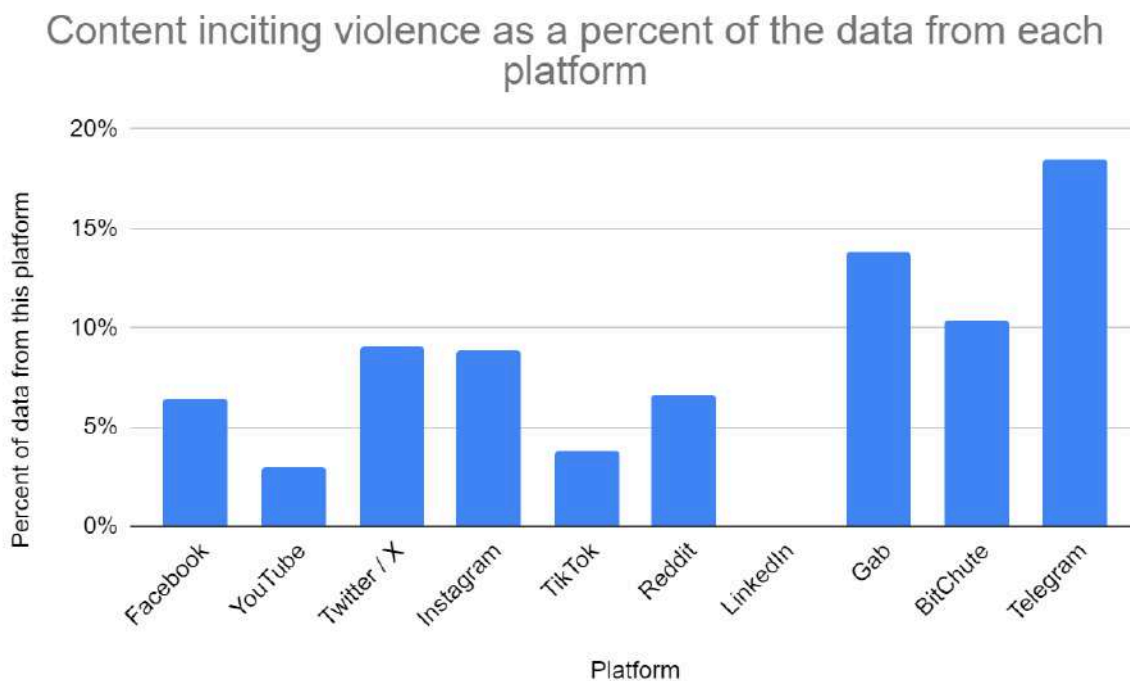
This graph shows the absolute number of items involving anti-Muslim violence found on each platform.

Graph 26

Inciting anti-Muslim violence by Platform
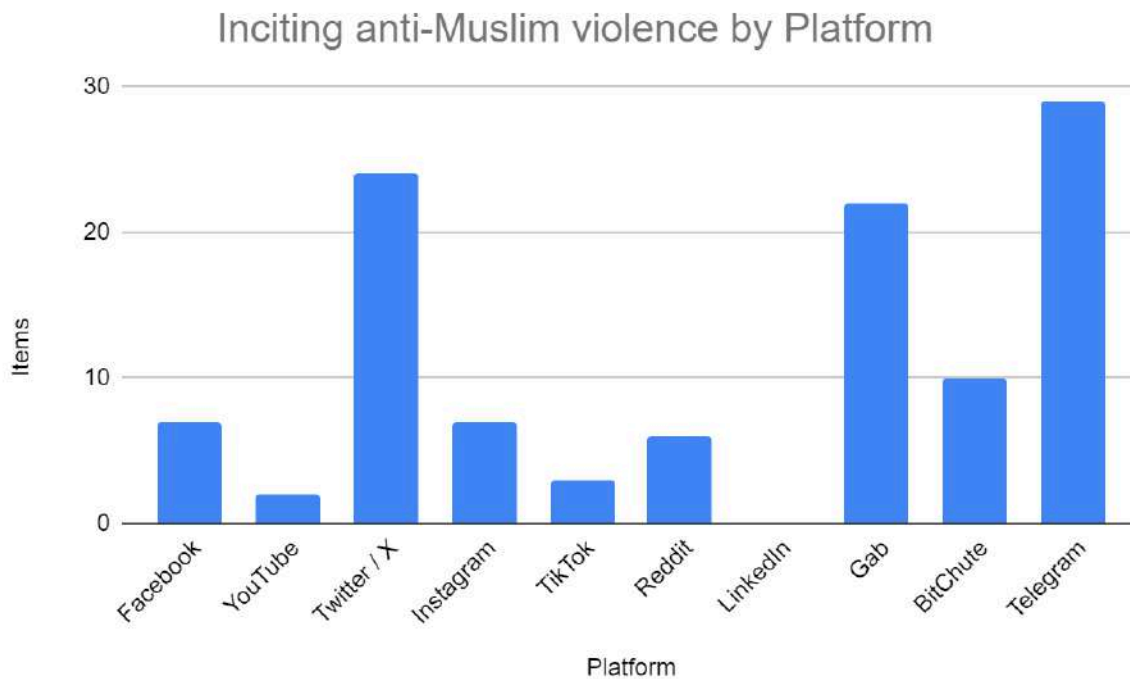
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involves inciting anti-Muslim violence.

Graph 27

Content inciting violence as a percent of the data from each platform

Examples of inciting anti-Muslim violence

Item #867 from Gab (online)

This post on Gab demonstrates the category of Inciting anti-Muslim violence. The post praises the fact that the Hamas-Iran war with Israel is spreading worldwide and specifically calls to violence against muslims by saying: "Force Deport Muslims At Gun point!". This post also falls into the categories of demonising/dehumanising Muslims and Xenophobia / anti-refugee, and Socially excluding Muslims.

Item #722 from Facebook (Removed)

In this example from Facebook we see the characterization of inciting anti-Muslim violence. The post contains two largely irrelevant images, including a selfie of the poster. The text of the post includes the text: "Death to all GoatFuckers!", two American flag emojis and a army helmet emoji and the hashtags: #killemall #usa #trump2024 #fuckliberals. Goatfuckers is a derogatory and racist term for Muslims/Arabs. So the post calls for the death of all

Muslims/Arabs. The poster is most likely a white nationalist given the 'patriotic' emojis and hashtags. This post would also be categorised as demonising/dehumanising Muslims, Socially excluding Muslims, anti-Arab racism and Muslims as a cultural threat.

Item #3754 from Linkedin (online)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DRurHhaUKtKziYZHqjdm_6ugNcJOikgo/view

This comment on LinkedIn is in response to another post about the Chinese treatment of Uigher Muslims. The initial post describes how China is "on the verge of completely annihilating Islam from the Chinese land". This comment asks if India can "follow China", implying that India should also begin "annihilating Islam" by adopting the same practices as China. This post therefore incites violence towards Muslims by suggesting that India adopts policies and behaviours which will "annihilate" Muslims from the country.

Xenophobia/ Anti-Refugee

When anti-Muslim hate takes the form of xenophobia it often focuses on opposition to Muslim immigration, sometimes the focus is narrower and focuses on refugees, other times it is broader and suggests all Muslims are "the other" and not equal members of society and uses this sentiment to suggest Muslims should leave, be deported, or otherwise removed. Whatever its form, it represents a form of anti-Muslim hatred.

A related narrative suggests Muslim refugees do not deserve their status, or have manipulated the system to gain refugee status without merit. This can lead to other narratives such as that Muslims abuse the welfare system. These narratives may also fit within the "Muslims as dishonest" category.

Xenophobia or anti-refugee hate directed against Muslims was present in 20% of all the anti-Muslim hate data we collected. It wasmore common on YouTube, where 34% of the data included content related to this category, than on other platforms. It was almost completely absent on Reddit (4%).

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	20	18%
YouTube	23	34%
Twitter / X	45	17%
Instagram	12	15%
TikTok	20	25%
Reddit	4	4%
LinkedIn	10	15%
Gab	39	25%
BitChute	24	25%
Telegram	25	16%

This graph shows the absolute number of items involving xenophobia or anti-refugee forms of anti-Muslim hate found on each platform.

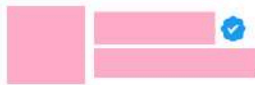*Graph 28*

Xenophobia and anti-refugee content by Platform
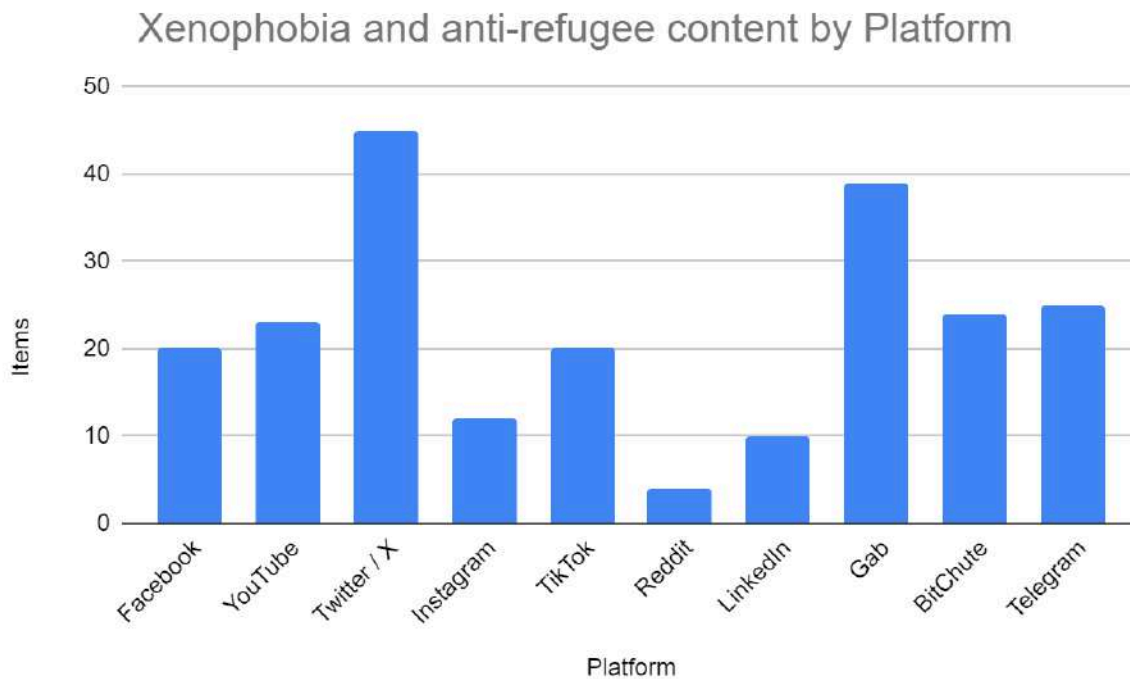
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involves xenophobia or anti-refugee forms of anti-Muslim hate

Graph 29

Xenophobia and anti-refugee content as a percent of the data from each platform
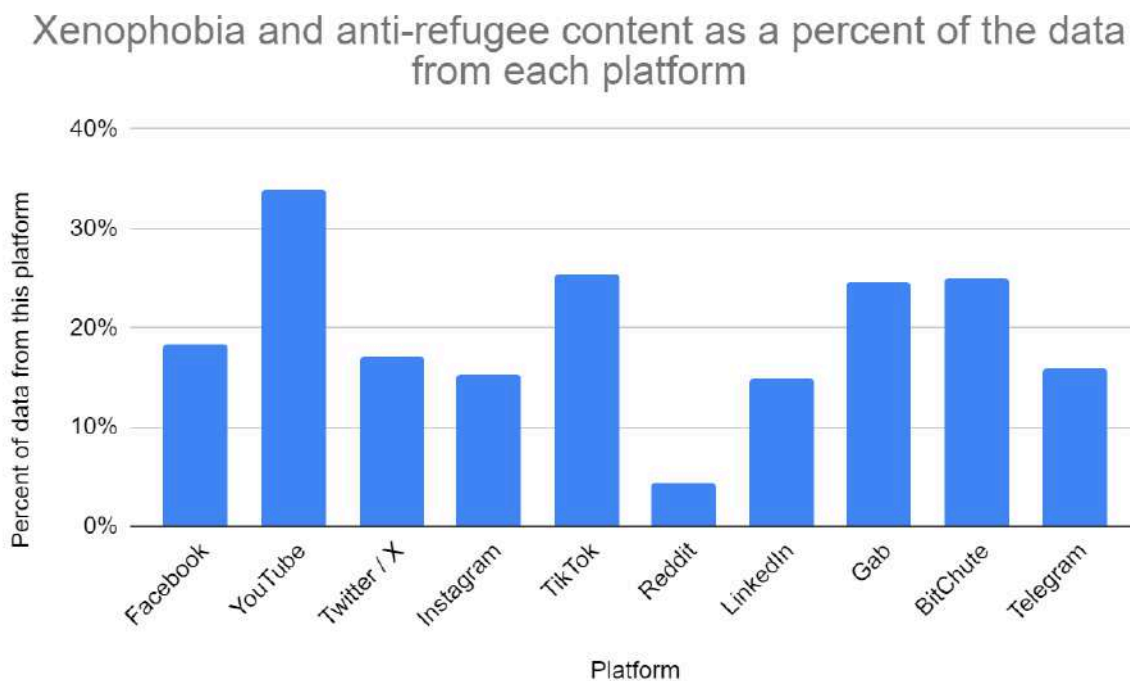
Examples of Xenophobia/ Anti-Refugee anti-Muslim hate

Item #1274 from X (online)

This example from X demonstrates the category of xenophobia/anti-refugee. The post contains a video showing muslims praying in a public area and the text states that "These people did not come to the UK to assimilate with our culture. They came to take over and replace us". The text combined with the video demonises muslim people, as foreigners or refugees who have moved to the UK. The implication is they are nefariously not trying to assimilate but replace "us" i.e. the 'native British' people. This idea is reminiscent of white replacement theory, and draws on the ideas and wording. This post also fits the categories of Muslims as a cultural threat, Muslims as a security risk and Socially excluding Muslims.

Item #3765 from Gab (online)

This post from Gab is an image of a single white student in a classroom full of children of other ethnicities. One of these other children is wearing a Hijab; a head covering worn by some Muslim women. The text overlayed on this image reads "Immigration is Genocide". The implication is that immigration (including the immigration of Muslims) will overwhelm a county's original identity and "genocide" its native population. This post is therefore xenophobic because it implies that migrants from other countries pose a threat to the national identity of the user's home country. This post would also fit the category of Muslims as a cultural threat.

Item #3782 from Telegram (online)

This illegal immigrant Islamic terrorist has cost the taxpayer $200 million - but they still freed him from jail and restored his Australian citizenship

"Home affairs minister Peter Dutton revoked Benbrika's citizenship to protect Australians from the danger posed by the convicted terrorist. The High Court restored his citizenship last October. On December 19 he was freed from jail on a one-year extended supervision order"

This has gone too far.

Join us:

😡 63   🤮 13   👍 3   👎 2   😁 1   👁 2630   3:57 PM

This post from Telegram is categorised as xenophobia/anti-refugee. The channel that posted this is called "No to Immigration", a flagrantly xenophobic name. The post uses the image and story of Abdul Nacer Benbrika, an immigrant to Australia and convicted terrorist, to promote an anti-refuge and xenophobic narrative. The post demonises all refugees, immigrants and muslims by applying the specific case of Benbrika to all. This post also fits into the categories of Muslims as a security risk and Socially excluding Muslims.

Muslims as dishonest

Anti-Muslim hate has be expressed through narratives that claim Muslims are dishonest and manipulative. This is often used in efforts to exclude Muslims from society. These narratives range from basic slogans like "never trust a Muslim" to misrepresentations of the Islamic doctrine of Taqiyya.

Taquiyya is a Shia doctrine, which means "to shield or to guard oneself" (Enayat 2005: 175). It allows a Shia Muslim to pretend to be a Sunni Muslim, including by following Sunni prayer rituals, jurisprudence and by directly claiming to be Sunni rather than Shia. The practice arose as means of protection from the persecution of rulers hostile to the minority Shia sect of Islam, but continues to be practised in places like Indonesia not out of fear, but as a means of establishing greater unity within the Muslim community.

This was a less common form of anti-Muslim hate. The platform with the both the greatest number of instances of this hate (16 items), and the where they made up the percent of the data captured (10%) was Gab.

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	7	6%
YouTube	2	3%
Twitter / X	11	4%
Instagram	5	6%
TikTok	4	5%
Reddit	7	8%
LinkedIn	5	7%
Gab	16	10%
BitChute	6	6%
Telegram	6	4%

This graph shows the absolute number of items found on each platform that promote the narrative of Muslims as dishonest.

Graph 30

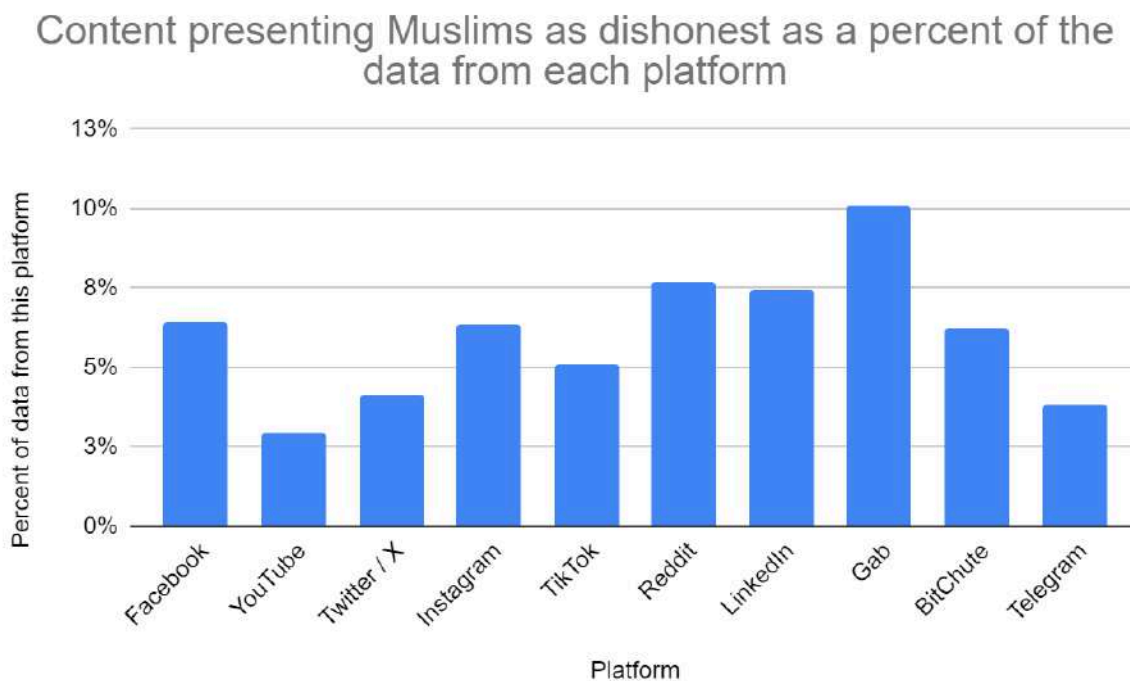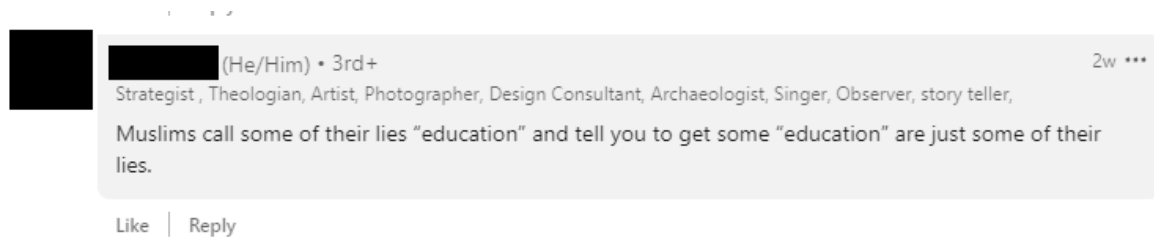Muslims as dishonest by Platform
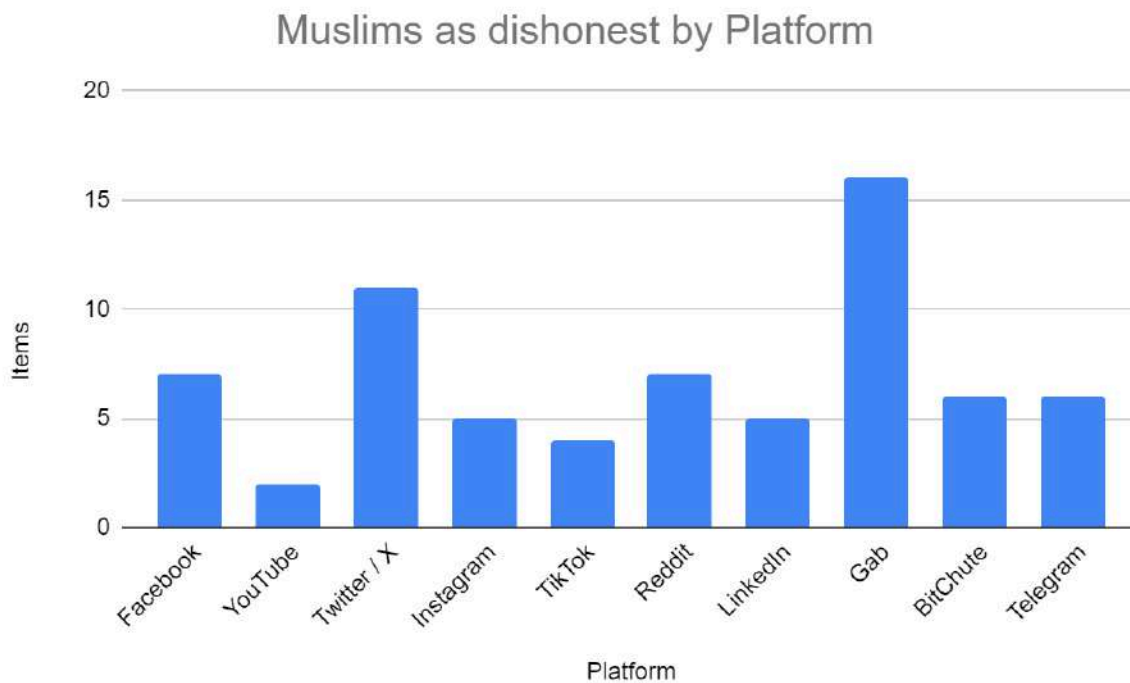
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involves narratives of Muslims as dishonest.

Graph 31

Content presenting Muslims as dishonest as a percent of the data from each platform

Examples of the narrative of Muslims as dishonest

Item #1904 from Linkedin (removed)

Here we see an example from LinkedIn demonstrating Muslims as dishonest. The commenter generalises that 'Muslims call some of their lies "education"' and says muslims tell you to get some education, but implies it means learn their lies. The commenter implies that lying is part and parcel of Islam. It is also implied that there is a nefariousness to "muslim dishonesty" as it is presented as subversive.

Item #3110 from Linkedin (online)

This comment on LinkedIn is in response to a post claiming that Islamic Extremism is a threat to London. This user starts their comment with the words "typical Muslim", thereby equating Islamic Extremists with all Muslims. The user then writes "Jihadist hatred at its worst… denying the truth", implying that Muslims (as well as being Islamic Extremists) "deny the truth". This user therefore claims that Muslims are dishonest. This post also fits the category of Muslims as a threat to national security because the post implies that all Muslims are violent extremists.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ED8mgE1tJy48SHgdT9ASQ2eIjzJFKh1r/view

In this comment from Reddit we see the classification of Muslims as dishonest. In response to a news article about a survey of America muslims opinions in regards to the October 7 attacks, the user comments that "Remember, 57% will admit to it in a survey. There are many who will openly lie about their beliefs (Taqiyya) if they fear what those in power will do if they were honest." Taqiyya is the Islamic practice of concealing one's Islamic beliefs if under threat of death or injury due to those beliefs[51]. The use of Taqiyya in framing Muslims as dishonest is commonly seen in Islamaphobic discourse. The commenter is insinuating that many Muslims lie about their beliefs because their beliefs are nefarious and would be seen as threatening to "those in power". This post also fits the classification of Muslims as a cultural threat.

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[51] Matt Stefon, "taqiyyah, religious doctrine", *Britannica,* 2022.
https://www.britannica.com/topic/taqiyyah

Undermining Muslim allies

This category covers content that seeks to undermine those wording against anti-Muslim hate, or to undermine the work countering anti-Muslim hate itself.

One example of this category is where content suggests anti-Muslim hate is acceptable by saying "it is not racist to criticise Islam as people of many races practise Islam". Some reject this by reference to definitions that explain anti-Muslim hate either is, or is like, racism. Others point out that not all forms of hate speech are racism, misogyny for example isn't racism, that doesn't make it acceptable.

Another example is where people argue they are merely criticising a set of ideas, but they do so in a way that makes stereotypical allegations about, or seeks to draw implications about, all Muslims. Such discussion is no longer merely discussing the idea.

A third narrative focuses on the duty to fight the enemy in our midst and such content may be presented as anti-terrorism or strong on crime. When it extends to attacking those who warn when such narratives become a general demonisation of Muslims, it becomes relevant to this category.

At the time this data was collected there were very instances of this type of anti-Muslim hate. They accounted for only 1% of the collected data. We have omitted the graphs shown in the other sections due to the low numbers.

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	4	4%
YouTube	0	0%
Twitter / X	4	2%
Instagram	1	1%
TikTok	0	0%
Reddit	1	1%
LinkedIn	1	1%
Gab	2	1%
BitChute	1	1%
Telegram	1	1%

Examples of undermining Muslim allies

Item #3898 from Linkedin (online)

In this example from LinkedIn we can see the classification of Undermining Muslim allies. In response to a news article about a United States federal court judge nomination debate, that

reportedly developed into Islamophobia, the commenter responds "Islamophobia is not a valid diagnosis; it is contrived to fit an agenda - mostly policial". The commenter is undermining Muslim allyship by claiming it is not genuine, and only done so to win a political debate. The commenter doesn't engage with the accused islamophobic comments and conduct presented, rather tries to diminish the support against islamophobia.

Item #3825 from Gab (online)

This example from Gab is classified as Undermining Muslim Allies. The post links to an article about a Congresswoman standing up to racist abuse of Ilhan Omar. The post text mocks the Congresswoman (and any affront to racism) by saying: 'Oh. Racism again', which implies the claim of racism is being used dishonestly.

Item #634 from Facebook (online)

A transgender shoots up Christians in a school, and others carry out other acts of violence, yet the government says the transgenders are the ones under attack. Muslims are hurting Jews and even killing them in America yet our government is working hard to combat Islamaphobia 🤦🤦

👍 1   1 comment
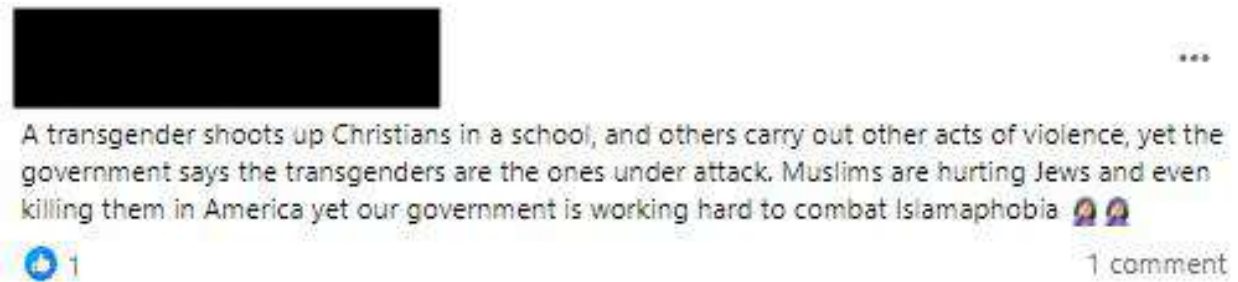
This post is hateful towards both trangender people and Muslims. It claims that "Muslims are hurting Jews and even killing them in America [...]", thus implying that Muslims are violent extremists. The post continues "[...] yet our government is working hard to combat Islamophobia", and includes an emoji of a woman "face-palming" (a sign of frustration at stupidity). The post therefore criticises the US government on the grounds that they intend to "combat Islamophobia" and help support Muslims. As a result, this post undermines the actions of the US government, which this user perceives to be aligned with the Muslim community, and intends to undermine Muslim allies.

Item #3451 from YouTube (online)

2 weeks ago

Islamophobia should be called 'common sense'

👍 35 👎   Reply
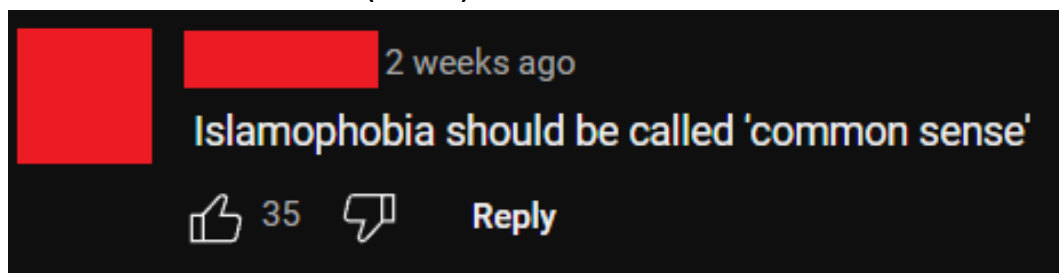
This is a comment on a Youtube video that oppose efforts against anti-Muslim hate. The comment says "Islamophobia should be called common sense". This comment serves to justify anti-Muslim hate by claiming hating Muslim people is "common sense" and by implication, efforts to counter it are wrong or stupid.

Socially excluding Muslims

The category of socially excluding Muslims covers content that seems to make it harder, or impossible, to both live as a Muslim within the community and participate in the life of the community. Content seeking to prevent the development of the infrastructure a Muslim community needs, such as a mosque, or local shops stocking halal food, are examples. It can also involve campaigns against Muslim owned businesses due to the religion of the owner, or against the inclusion of Muslim community groups in community events or consultations. Campaigns against Muslim candidates for political office, whether elected or appointed, based on their religion, also fall within this category.

Across all our data, 158 items, that is 14%, fell within this category. On Facebook 24% of the content fell within the category, on YouTube it was 21%. LinkedIn had the lowest rate (7%) of this kind of anti-Muslim hate. The largest number of items in this category, 36 items, was found on X (Twitter).

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	26	24%
YouTube	14	21%
Twitter / X	36	14%
Instagram	12	15%
TikTok	7	9%
Reddit	10	11%
LinkedIn	5	7%
Gab	19	12%
BitChute	9	9%
Telegram	18	11%

This graph shows the absolute number of items found on each platform that seek to socially exclude Muslims.

Graph 32

Socially excluding Muslims by Platform
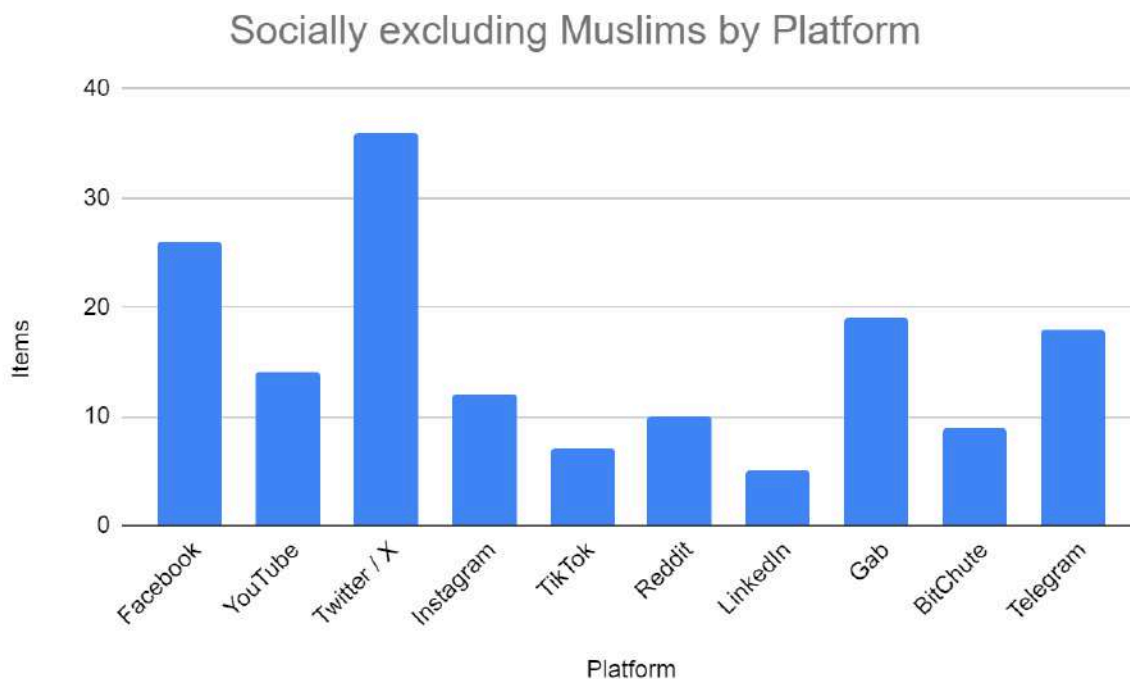
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involve socially excluding Muslims.

Graph 33

Content socially excluding Muslims as a percent of the data from each platform
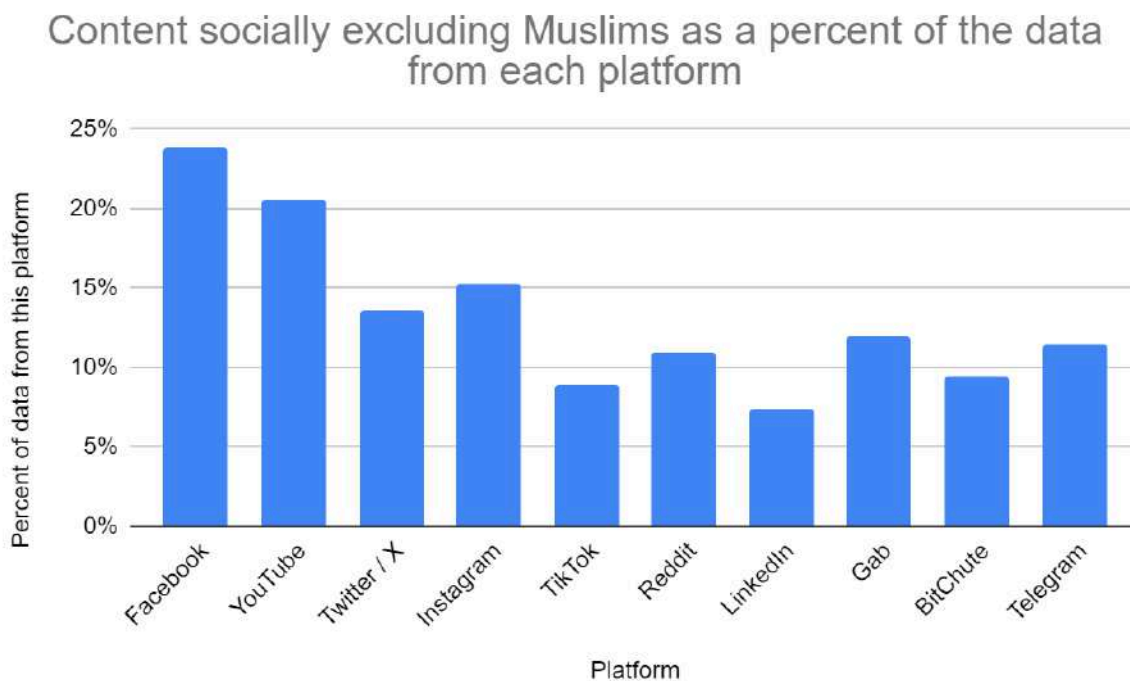
Examples of socially excluding Muslims

Item #3997 from Instagram (removed)
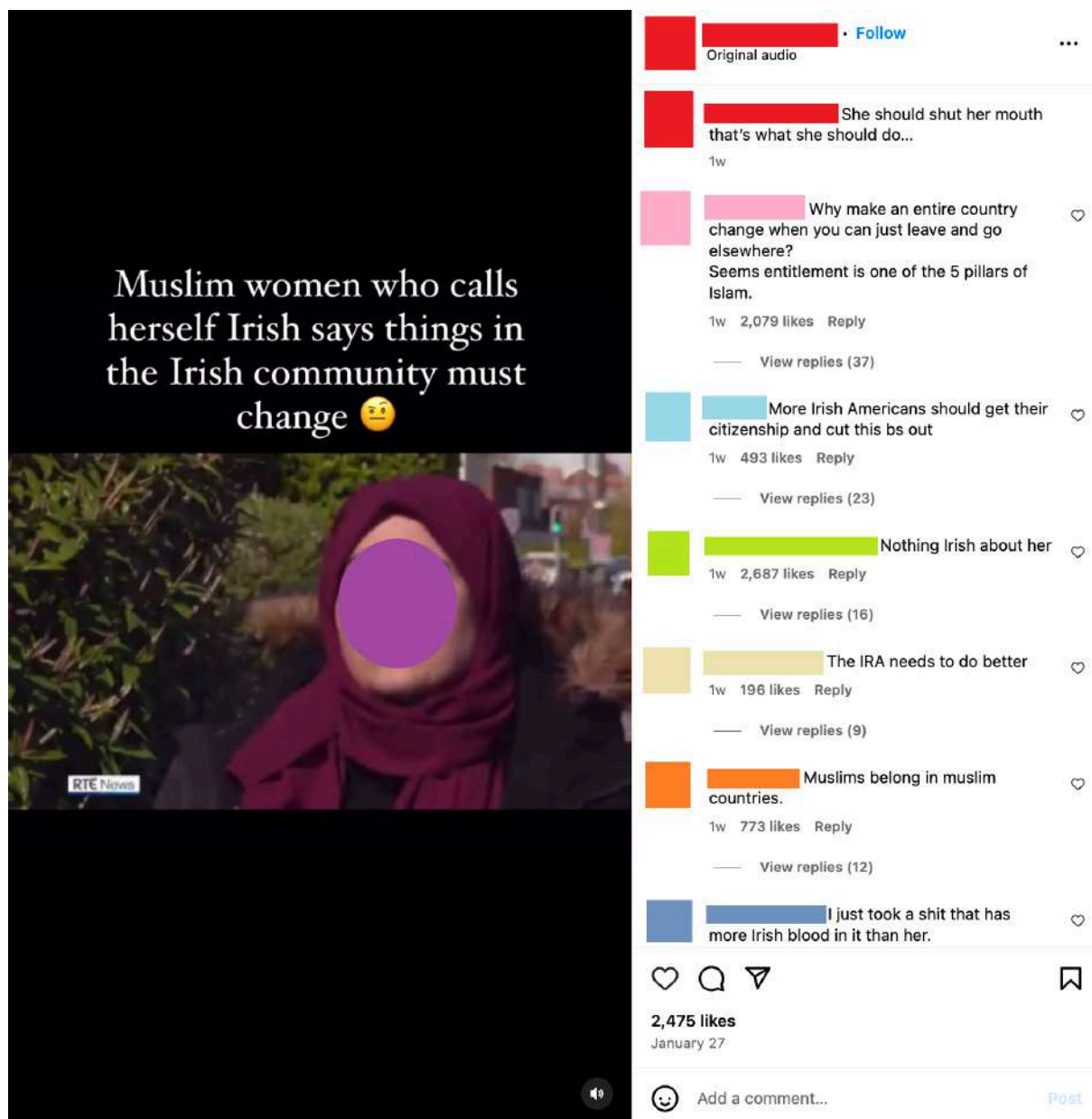
This example from Instagram falls into the category of Socially excluding Muslims. The post contains a brief video clip in which a Muslim woman discusses how culturally Irish people often dismiss stereotypes, claiming they are not serious. However, she believes that as an Irish person, stereotypes should be taken more seriously. Text appears on the video saying: "Muslim women who calls herself Irish says things in the Irish community must change". The video and text of the post indicate that the poster does not think this lady is, or should be, part of Irish society. The exclusion is based purely on her Muslim identity. There are various islamophobic and derogatory comments. The comments of "Nothing Irish about her", and "I just took a shit that has more Irish blood in it than her" exclude her from Irish society. The reference to her Irish blood purity is racist. The comments "Muslims belong in muslim countries" is xenophobic, and again excludes her from the Irish community.

Item #3853 from BitChute (online)

A NEW MOSQUE HAS BEEN OPENED UP IN THE MIDDLE OF A HOUSING ESTATE IN DUBLIN 15

WATCH

👁 389   👍 9   👎 2
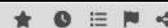
First published at 14:09 UTC on January 27th, 2024.

#DUBLIN   #MOSQUE   #ISLAM

💲 | Subscribe 🔕
👥 2642 subscribers
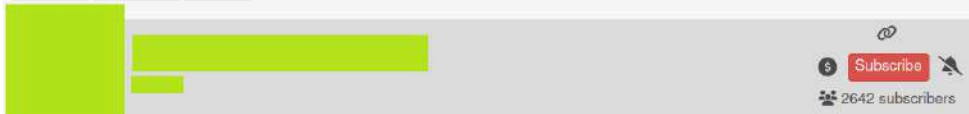
Have you had enough yet, Irish people?

Video sourced from ▒▒▒ on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/▒▒▒

Category   News & Politics

Sensitivity   Normal - Content that is suitable for ages 16 and over

In this video from Bitchute we see the categorization of socially excluding Muslims. The video title is "A new Mosque has been opened up in the middle of a housing estate in Dublin 15" with the description of "Have you had enough yet, Irish people?". The video is a short clip of the outside of a mosque, with people coming and going. The description and title of the video act to socially exclude muslims as the author is framing a mosque in Dublin to be antithetical to "Irish people" i.e. the broader Irish society. The post also fits the categories of demonising/dehumanising Muslims , Muslims as a cultural threat and xenophobia/anti-refugee.
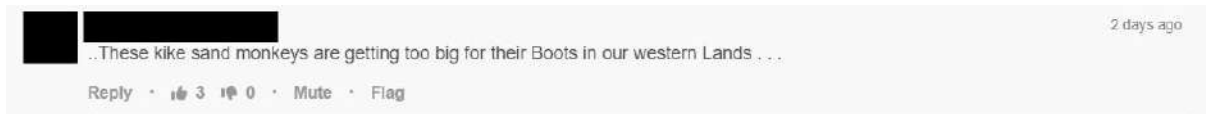
This post is a comment on a video on BitChute. The video claims that Donald Trump is "trolling" the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia by touching him on the shoulder. This comment says that "sand monkeys" (a derogatory term for Muslims and Arabs) are getting "too big for their Boots in our western Lands". This suggests that Muslims and Arabs are becoming too comfortable in western society and implies that these "Western lands" do not belong to them. This post therefore aims to exclude Muslims and Arabs from Western society by implying they are only visitors and should not feel comfortable there.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X39zGCoqAbDg7GocT43W53f6xAVu_mor/view

Other Anti-Muslim hate

There is a significant segment of our data that involves some element of anti-Muslim hate not captured by our existing schema. In total 35% of our data has some element causing it to be added to the "other" category. 15% of all anti-Muslim hate data in our sample was categorised only as "other", which accounts for a little under half (45%) of all the items that were classified as other. Further analysis is needed to determine whether some of these might fit within other categories if those categories were understood a little more broadly, or if there are new categories which should be added to the schema.

In absolute terms most of the content in the category "other" came from X, Gab and Telegram, which together provided more than half of this content. As a percentage of all the anti-Muslim hate, anti-Palestinian racism, and Anti-Muslim racism on each platform, Reddit (43%), X (Twitter) (39%), Facebook (38%), Gab (38%), Telegram (36%) and Instagram (34%) had higher levels and TikTok (24%), BitChute (24%), YouTube (25%), and LinkedIn (25%) has lower levels of content classified as "other".

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	41	38%
YouTube	17	25%
Twitter / X	103	39%
Instagram	27	34%
TikTok	19	24%
Reddit	39	43%
LinkedIn	17	25%
Gab	60	38%
BitChute	23	24%
Telegram	56	36%

This graph shows the absolute number of items found on each platform that were categorised as "other".

Graph 34
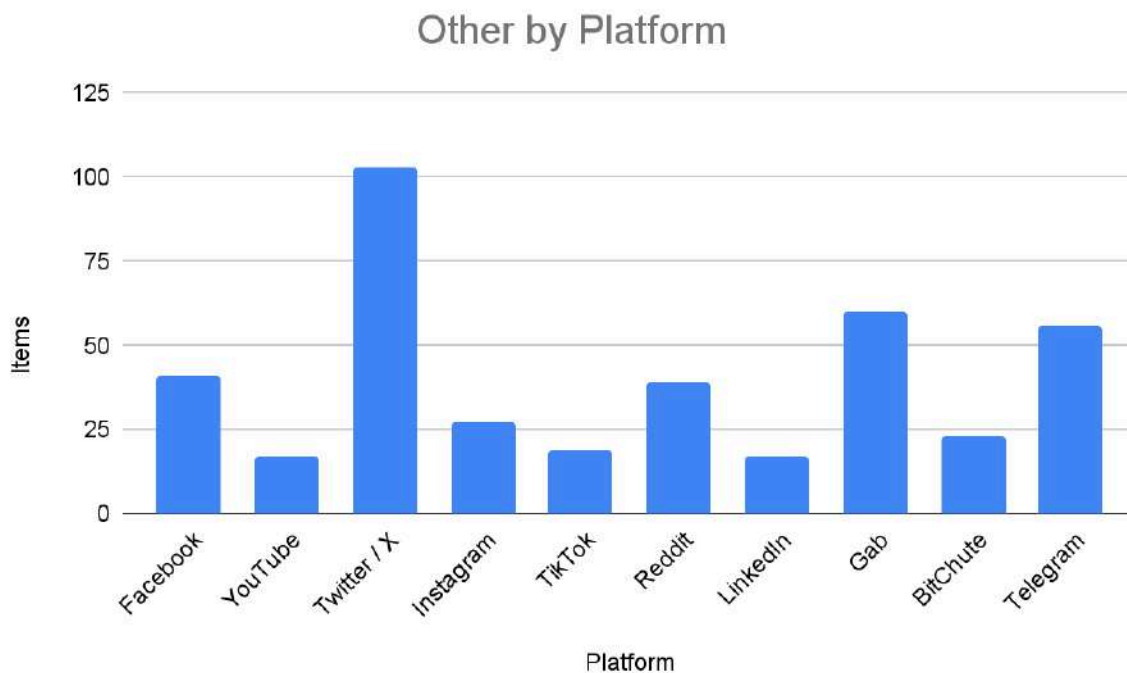
Other by Platform

The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that was categorised as other.

Graph 35

Content categorised as "other" as a percent of the data from each platform
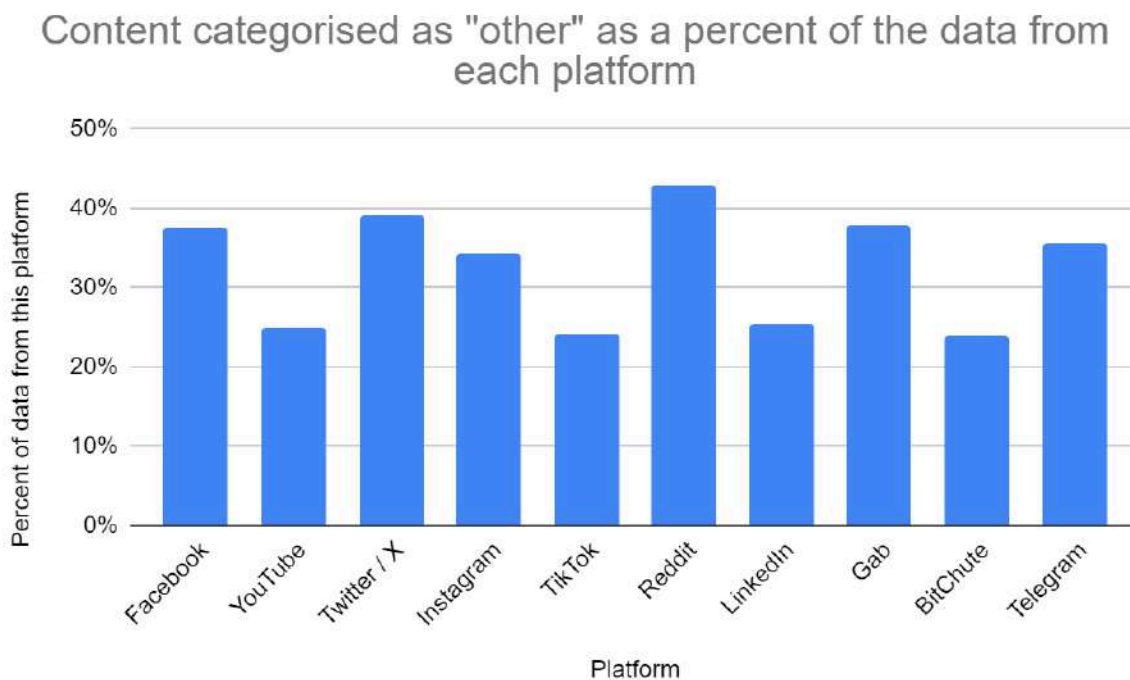
Examples of content classified as other

Item #400 (removed) - Telegram (a less common type of hate)

This example promotes the idea that Islam promotes violence, and Muslims are violent. It does so in the context of Muslim states in general, and in Iran in particular, rather than discussing Muslims as a security threat in non-Muslim countries.

The message is largely flawed as Iran, even today, has one of the largest Jewish communities in the Middle East outside of Israel and its Jewish community is considered by many scholars to be Iran's oldest minority and has been present for more than 1,000 years before the time of Mohamed, back when the country was known as Pursia.[52] While the conditions of the Jews in Iran are complicated, they are not facing systemic harassment or being killed as this post implies.[53] That makes the post disinformation designed to present Muslim governments and their citizens as violent.

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[52] Tabby Refael, "What Will Become of the Jews of Iran? Part One", *The Jewish Journal,* 17 January 2024. https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/367294/what-will-become-of-the-jews-of-iran-part-one/

[53] Ibid.

Item #3227 (removed) - Gab (a group of examples that could be reclassified)

Many items only in the "other" category use the term "sandnigger" and belong in the anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab Racism category. As Professor Hagop Kevorkian explained, this term was created by white supremacists to attack those who didn't neatly fit into the concepts of "white" or "black".[54] The poster is an obvious neo-Nazi account.

Item 3194 (removed) - Instagram (a group requiring a category to be broadened)

This and similar "other" examples involve a reference to "goat fuckers". This term is clearly highly offensive, but as Lotte Hogeweg and Monique Neuleman point out, it is unclear if it refers to Arabs, Muslims, North Africans, or Turkish people.[55] The Wordsense dictionary gives it multiple meanings covering both anti-Muslim hate and racism against people from North Africa, West Asia or Central Asia.[56] In this particular example, given the image, it clearly refers to Muslims and might be better classified under category 2,

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[54] Hagop Kevorkian, "This is not a black and white issue", *Al Jazeera*, 21 June 2015. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/6/21/this-is-not-a-black-and-white-issue

[55] L. Hogeweg and M. Neuleman, "The hurtfulness of slurs, nouns and adjectives as group labels", Linguistics in the Netherlands Volume 39, 72–87, 2022, 75. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1075/avt.00062.hog

[56] https://www.wordsense.eu/goatfucker/
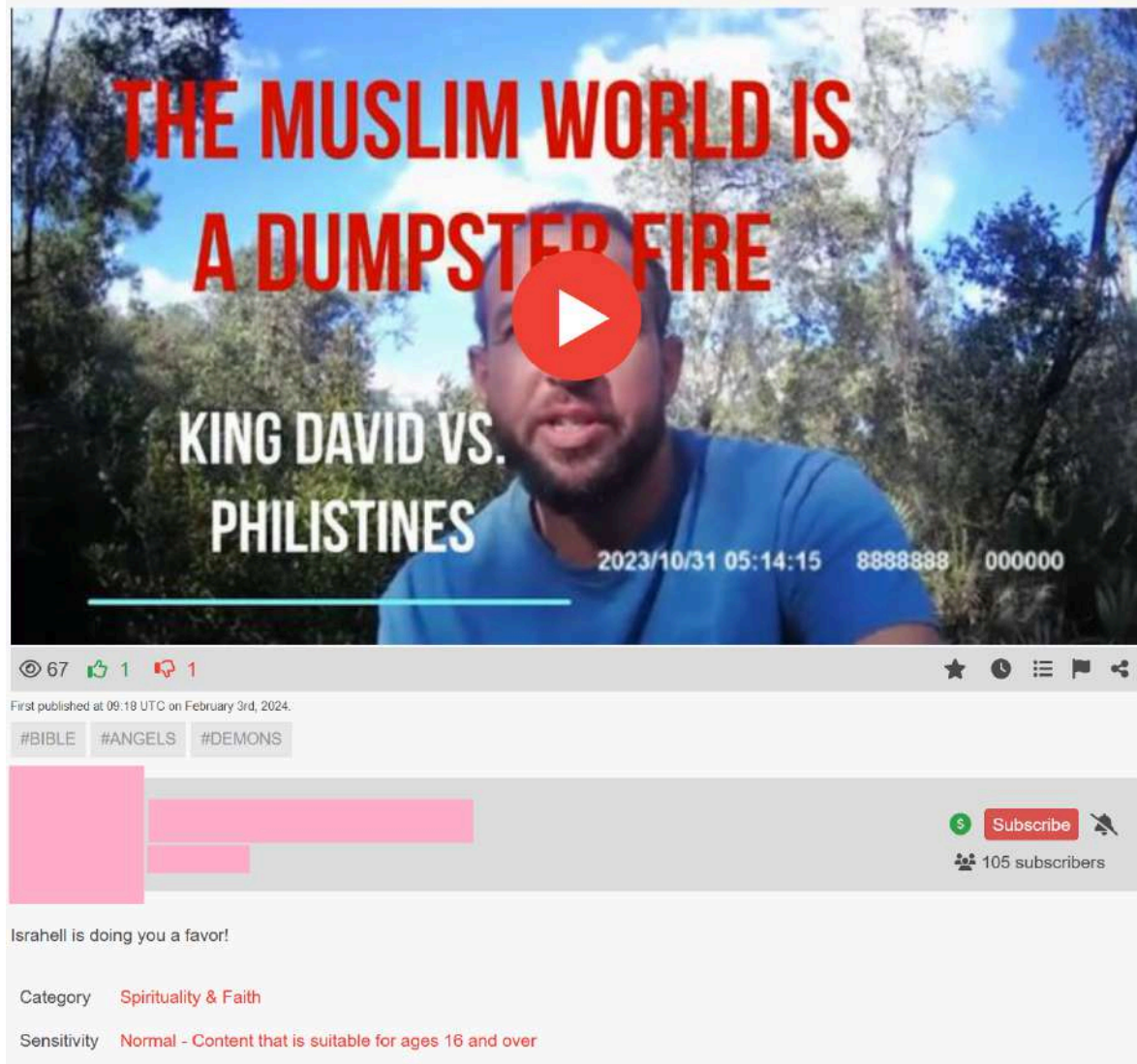
demonising or dehumanising, if we expand this to include anti-Muslim slurs. In other cases where the meaning was ambiguous, it might also be anti-Arab racism (category 11).

Item #3907 from BitChute (online)

In this video a man is talking to the camera, ranting about Muslims. The video title is "Muslim world is a dumpster fire". The man says in the video: "The whole muslim world is a bunch of bastards". The words "Worship satan" is used in reference to Muslims.The video is blatantly disparaging towards Muslims. The video also fits into the categories of demonization/dehumanization Muslims and Muslims as a cultural threat, however the hate in the video goes beyond just these two categories, and falls into this broader category as well.

Anti-Muslim jokes

The category of anti-Muslim jokes is a new category we introduced to our anti-Msulim hate schema for this report. As Simon Weaver explains, anti-Muslim jokes help to maintain anti-Muslim sentiment in society,[57] they often "contain material that is contemporary or caught up in emotive responses to recent political events",[58] and come in an inclusive form that involves stereotypes and an exclusionary form that involves death or removal of Muslims.[59]

The category of anti-Muslim jokes was less common and mostly found on Telegram (32 items), Facebook (30 items) and X (Twitter) (26 items). As a percentage of the anti-Muslim hate on a platform it was more prevelant on Facebook (28% of the data), Instagram (22% of the data) and Telegram (20% of the data).

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	30	28%
YouTube	2	3%
Twitter / X	26	10%
Instagram	17	22%
TikTok	5	6%
Reddit	9	10%
LinkedIn	2	3%
Gab	7	4%
BitChute	4	4%
Telegram	32	20%

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[57] Simon Weaver (2013) A rhetorical discourse analysis of online anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic jokes, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 36:3, 2013, 483-499, 486. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2013.734386
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid, 496.

This graph shows the absolute number of items found on each platform that were classified as anti-Muslim jokes.

Graph 36

Anti-Muslim jokes by Platform
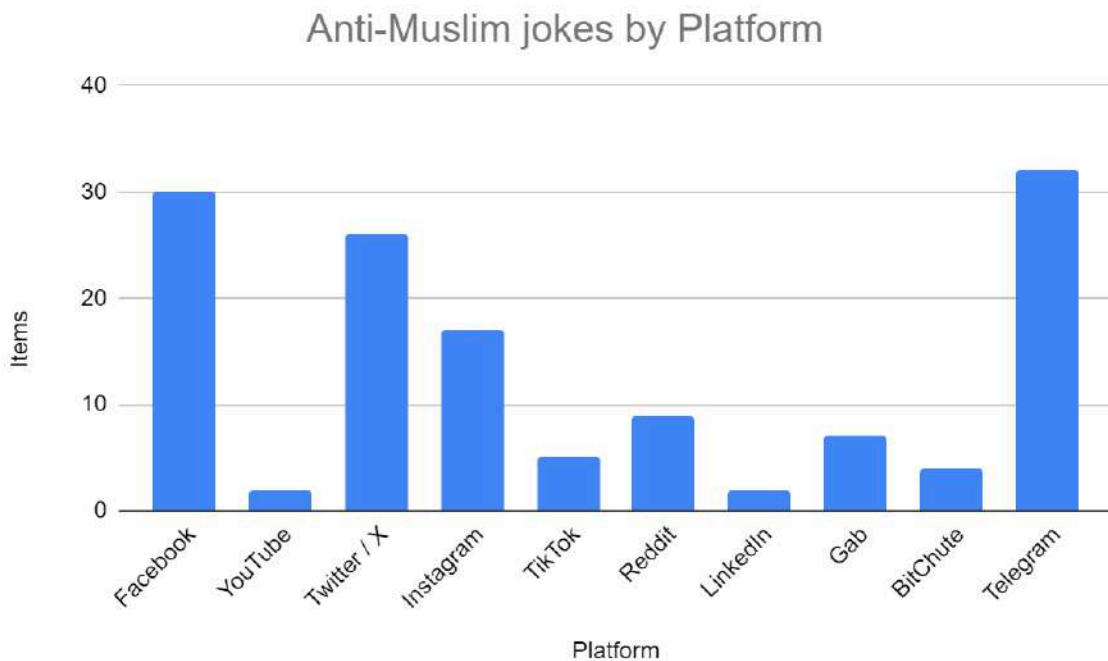
The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that involve anti-Muslim jokes.

Graph 37

Anti-Muslims jokes as a percent of the data from each platform
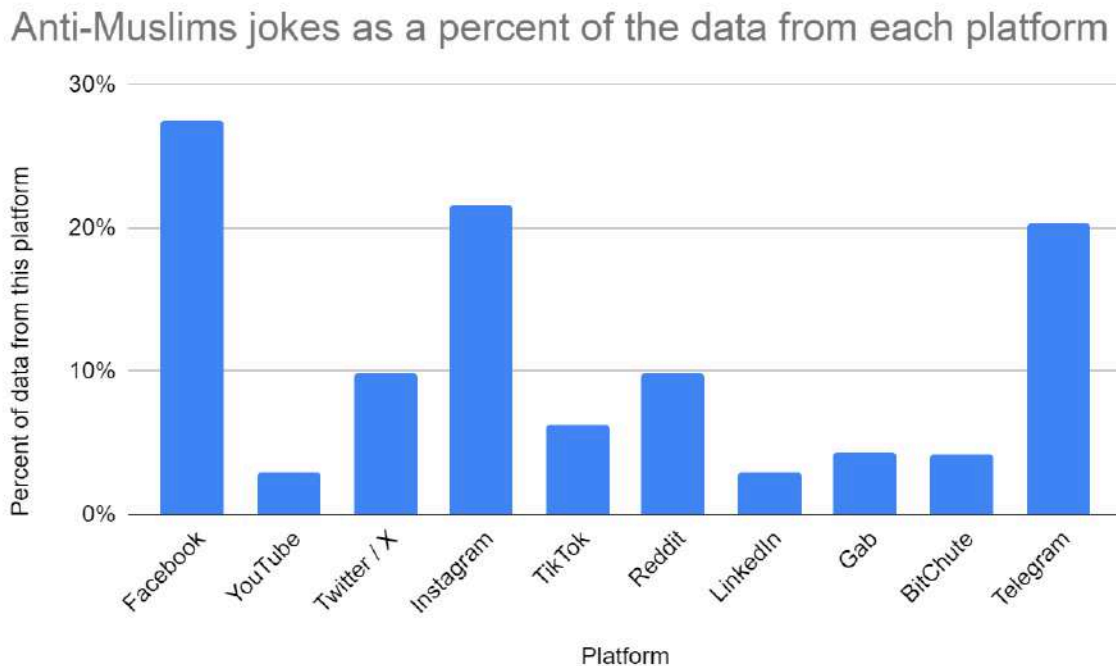
Examples of anti-Muslim jokes

Item #3882 from Facebook (online)

What is wrong in this image? We nurture a lamb with a lot of nutritious food and and when it grows up and becomes a goat we distribute it's meat among poor and needy during our festival of Eid-ul-Zuha also called Bakrid.

This post was shared in a Facebook group called: "Degenerates like you belong on a cross", where edgy, provocative and hateful memes are posted. This post contains an image with five Muslim men looking lustfully at a goat which has a love-heart above its head. The image has text asking "what is wrong with this image" and says that Muslims nurture goats and

distribute the meat to the needy as part of "Eid-ul-Zuha also called Bakrid". Eid-ul-Zuha is a muslim festival, sometimes called Bakrid due to the tradition of sacrificing a goat (bakr). The post is made by a profile with a muslim sounding name, and has the image of a Muslim man. The image plays into the stereotype of Muslim men having sexual intercourse with goats. The post is "written" from the perspective of a Muslim man, who is "clueless" about the aforementioned stereotype, whilst at the same time promoting the stereotype with the selected image. The use of correct terminology and descriptions of Muslim cultural and religious practice, as well as the selected profile name and display picture re-enforces the hate, making it appear genuine. It is designed to cause doubt in a moderator if reported.

Item #2284 From TikTok (online)
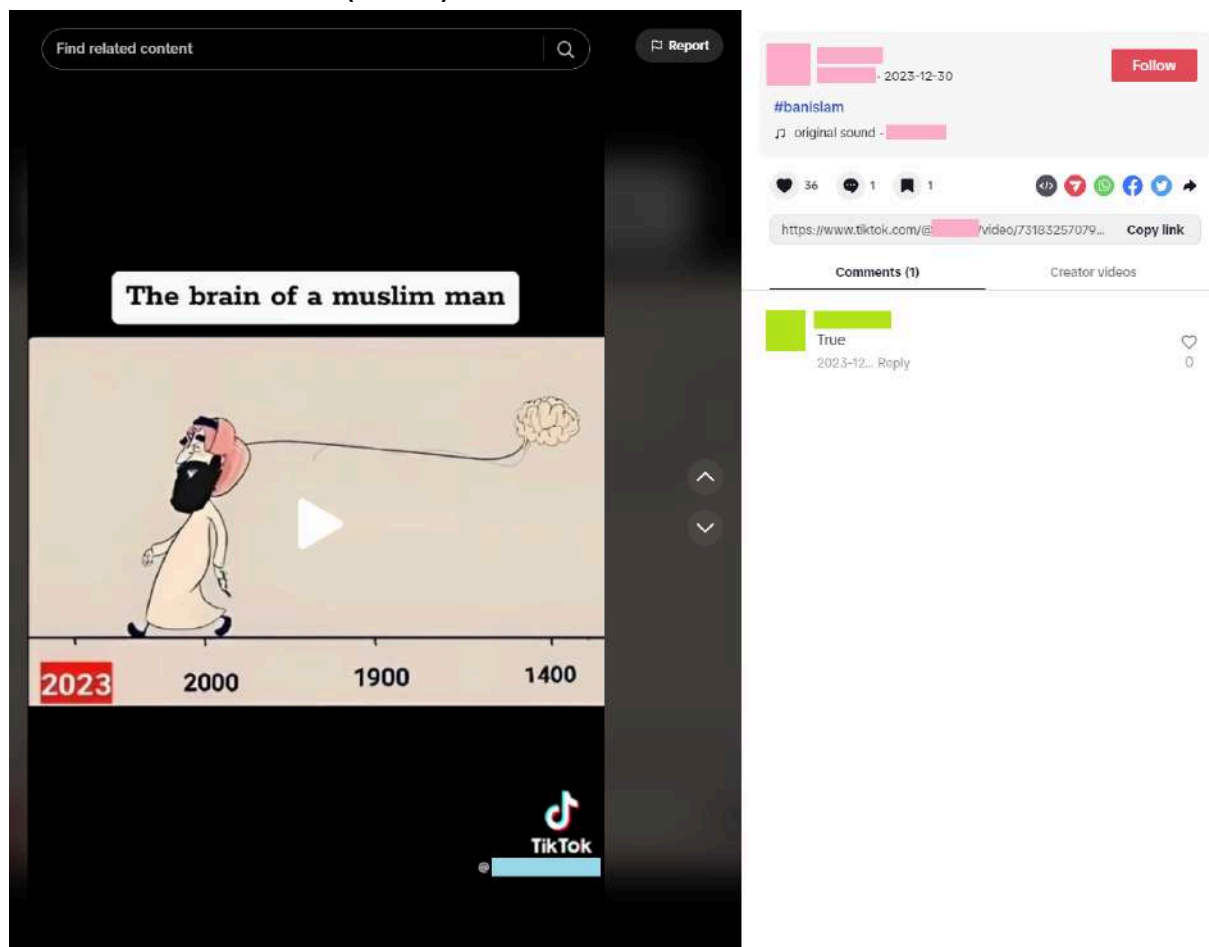
This video from TikTok contains a comic of a Muslim looking man positioned on a timeline, with the man in 2023 and his brain located over 1400. The text on the video says "The brain of a muslim man" and the description of the video has the hashtag #banislam. The short video has humorous lighthearted music as the backing. The use of the comic, and the choice of music makes this a "joke". The "joke" uses anti-Muslim stereotypes of being backward and primitive. The use of the hashtag to ban islam promotes an anti-muslim intent. It is not a criticism of a religion but a call to remove people's right to religious freedom. This post also falls in the categories of Demonising/dehumanising Muslims, Socially excluding Muslims and Muslims as a cultural threat.

Item #3728 from X (online)

This post on X is framed as a joke, with a question and answer, but the contents feeds into negative stereotypes that demonise Muslim men. The picture shows a young girl and an older man, both with their mouths open, in wedding garb. The girl appears to be crying while the man is laughing. They are both missing teeth. The caption reads "Question :- Why do you think its a compatible couple? Answer: because they both have lost some teeth due to their 'age'". The user implies that the older man is marrying the young girl, and that this "couple" will get on well because they have both lost their teeth. This joke is based on the stereotype that Muslims and Arabs are paedophiles, which is rooted in narratives about the Prophet Mohammad.

Racism against Palestinians or Arabs

The current Middle East conflict that began in October 2023 has led to an increase in anti-Muslim hate, but some of the hate is also expressed in classic racist terms that do not relate to Muslims but to Palestinians or Arabs more broadly. We capture this content along with the anti-Muslim hate.

The first point to note is that most of the hate was anti-Muslim hate not racism, at least in the English language content we monitored. Only 9% of the content involved racism against Palestinians or Arabs, and almost all of this (99%) also involved anti-Muslim hate. Only 9 items were racism without anti-Muslim hate also being present.

The use of slurs, such as "sand nigger", currently categorised under other, which may be considered either racist or anti-Muslim hate depending on context, may increase the number of racist posts, but this is a very generic sort of racism.

The racist content we did find was mostly on Facebook (26 items), x (Twitter)(23 items), and Telegram (21 items). A significantly higher percentage of the hate on Facebook involved such racism (24%) than seen on other platforms.

We note that this data was collected up to February 2024. Since then we have observed an increase in anti-Palestinian sentiment which appears to have started around May 2024. Whether expressions of this sentiment are anti-Palelestinian racism (hate speech) or criticism of pro-Palestinian political activism which would be a form of criticism of a political idea or political actions (and not hate speech) would depend on how the sentiment was expressed and what language was used. Further research is needed on emerging online content.

Platform	Items	Percent of data from this platform
Facebook	26	24%
YouTube	0	0%
Twitter / X	23	9%
Instagram	8	10%
TikTok	2	3%
Reddit	4	4%
LinkedIn	4	6%
Gab	13	8%
BitChute	6	6%
Telegram	21	13%

This graph shows the absolute number of items found on each platform that were categorised as racism against Palestinians or racism against Arabs.

Graph 38
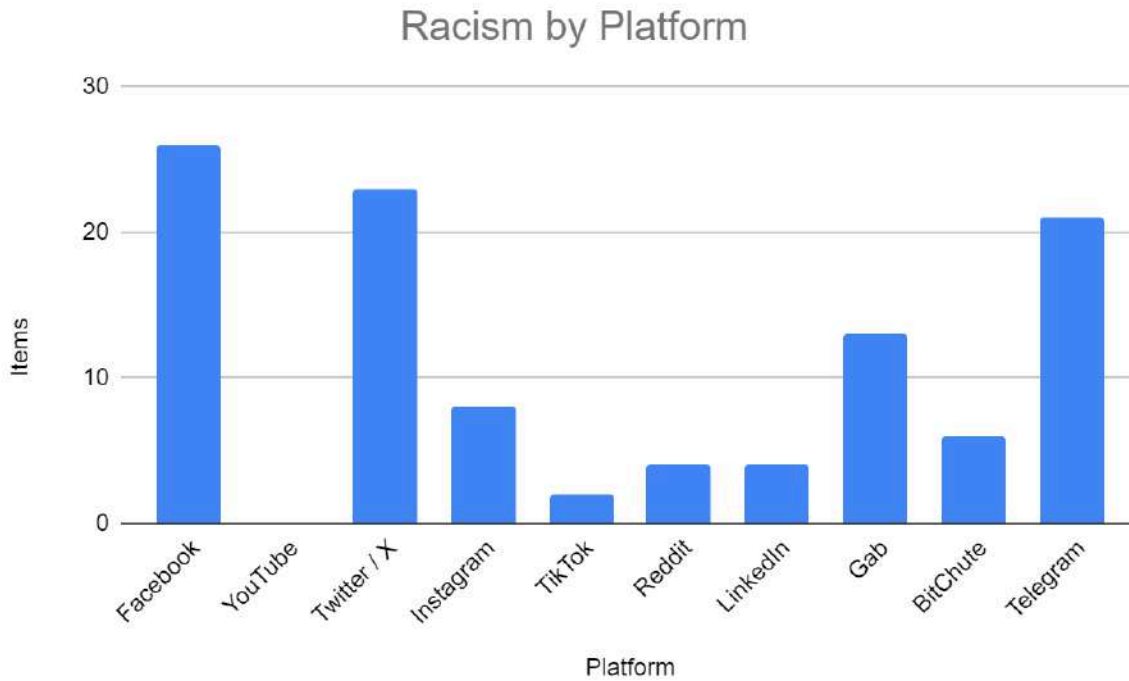
Racism by Platform

The following graph shows the percent of all data from each platform that was categorised as racism against Palestinians or racism against Arabs.

Graph 39

Racism as a percent of the data from each platform
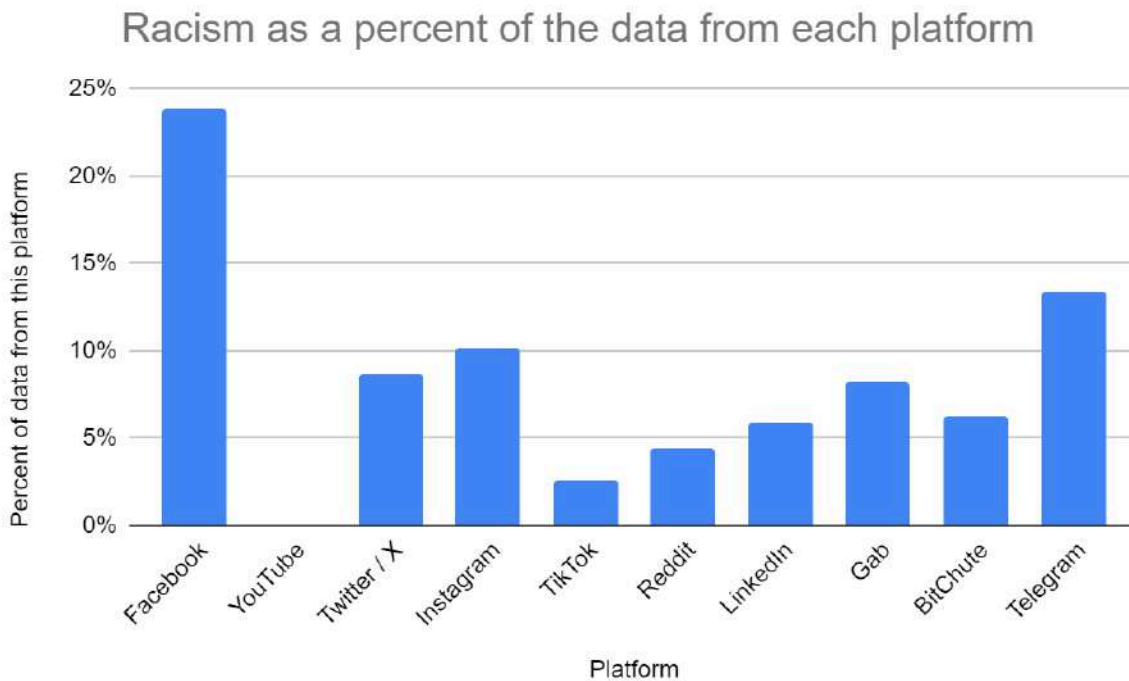
Examples of racism against Palestinians and racism against Arabs

Item #752 from Instagram (online)

In this example from Instagram a meme contrasts Afghanistan and Iran in the 70's with their state in 2012, they go from western like images to images where the women are wearing burkas. The meme then shows modern day Europe, comparing it to a version of Europe in the future (2050) where the women are wearing burkas. The post contains the text "Political correctness and lack of intellectual honesty". The post portrays the countries as backward and oppressive, and implies that this is what will happen to Europe in the future. While Afghanistan is Arab, and Iran isn't, the use of countries in the region seems to indicate the intent of being xenophobic and demonising Arabs and not just Muslims. The item is therefore placed in this category in addition to the categories of Muslims as a cultural threat, Muslims as a security risk, xenophobia / anti-refugee and Socially excluding Muslims.
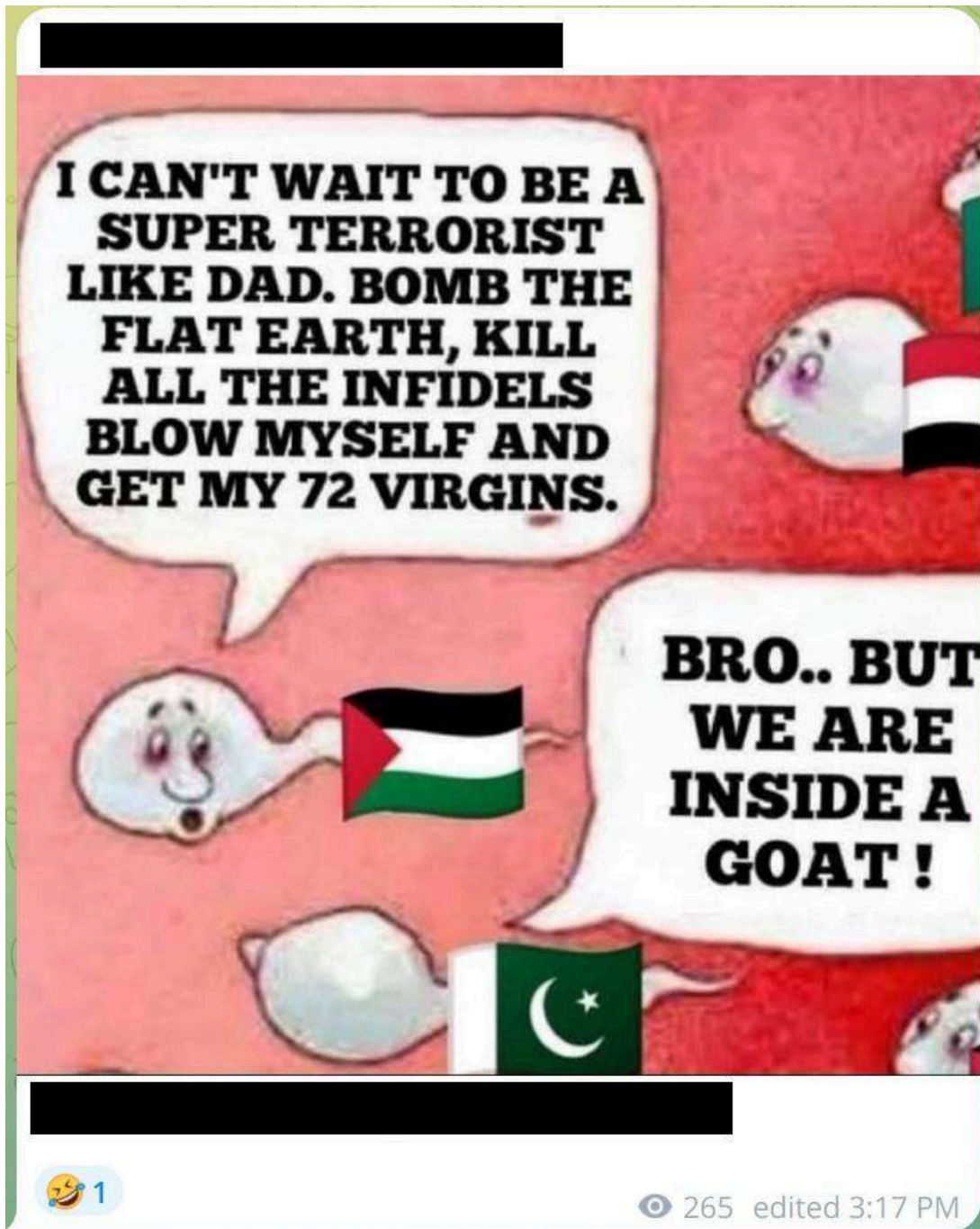
This example is from a Telegram channel called "Islam vs Humanity". The post contains a cartoon of sperm with the flags of Arab and Muslim countries talking to each other. The sperm with the Palestinian flag says "I can't wait to be a super terrorist like dad. Bomb the flat earth, kill all the infidels, blow myself up and get my 72 virgins", to which the sperm with Pakistan's flag says "bro..but we are inside a goat". This plays into a number of anit-arab, anti-muslim racist stereotypes including: all Arabs/Muslims are terrorists, primitive (flat earth) and Arab/Muslim men have sexual relationships with goats. The flags used are of Arab and Muslim countries, with the focus being the Palestinian flag. This post also falls into the categories of Musilms as a security risk and Anti-Muslim Jokes.

Item #4024 from Linkedin (online)

This post on LinkedIn features a picture with cartoons of the Palestinian flags being waved in crowds at various cities across Europe, identifiable by both labels and the use of iconic buildings. In the centre, there is text that reads "Wake Up! Radical islam is in your cities and hides behind the Palestinian Flag". The post accompanying this image includes hashtags such as #westisnext and #warning. This post associates Palestinians, and those who wave the Palestinian flag, with "radical Islam". It also implies that Western societies need to be warned about those who represent Palestinians in their cities. This post is racism against Palistinians because it implies that all Palestinians are dangerous supporters of "radical Islam" and pose a threat to western society. An interesting aspect of this image is that where we previously saw anti-Muslim hate replace racism, for example against the Pakistani community in the UK, now we are seeing the anti-Muslim hate being used to trigger anti-Palestinian racism.

Item #3763 from Gab (online)

Oh yeah. It's incredible. You know how blacks and Muzzies build up their countries....... Then for some odd reason they Turn Into Shitholes.

Go back to Somalia if that's where your allegiance is. Somalis who came legally and put America First are welcome but Somalis like you who admit they put Somalia First should go back to enjoy the incredible country your ancestors built. Surely it's incredible. Right?

1 repost

Like   Comment   Repost   Quote   Share

This post on Gab includes a picture from X (Twitter). In the post from X, a user says "Go back to Somalia if that's where your allegiance is" and asks: "Surely it's incredible. Right?". The implication is that Somalia is inferior to the United States, and the political demand is that immigrants who come to the United States should put the United States first or leave. The comment is not racist against people from Somalia as it is clearly about what people prioritise and their loyalties, which are political matters. Had the poster asserted that immigrants from Somalia were disloyal, that would be different and would constitute racism.

The post that shares the image comments, "You know how blacks and Muzzies build up their countries….. Then for some odd reason they Turn into Shitholes". The term "Muzzy" is a derogatory term for Muslims. This derogatory way of referring to Muslims and Muslim countries, as well as the implication that such countries are inferior to the West, because the efforts of those who build them up are lesser, is an example of anti-Muslim hatred, the context makes it about Muslim countries and therefore about Arabs (and others) as well. This is an example where the context contributes significantly.

Additional Themes

Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hate: a choice of terminology

In this report we have decided to use the term "anti-Muslim hatred", or simply "anti-Muslim hate", rather than "Islamophobia". This is not because we feel that the term Islamophobia is intrinsically flawed. Some use "Islamophobia" interchangeably with "anti-Muslim hatred", interpreting the term "Islamophobia" in a narrow sense that conforms to the meaning of the term "anti-Muslim hate". Others who use Islamophobia, however, give it a broader meaning that expands beyond the concept of hate speech as a human rights violation and into the area of blasphemy and the protection of ideas rather than people.

We used Islamophobia in the narrow sense when we published *Islamophobia on the Internet: the growth of online hate targeting Muslims* in 2013, the world's first report into online anti-Muslim hate.[60] As the report's sub-title made clear, and the report itself discussed, the scope of the Islamophobia examined was limited to hate speech targeting Muslims and "Hate speech is an attack on a person, or group of people, and must be distinguished from 'defamation of religion' or 'theological debate' which are attacks on ideas". It is equally important to keep in mind that "An attack on an idea can turn into an attack on a person when a disagreement over religious practise, acceptable as a matter of speech, morphs into action aimed at preventing the lawful religious practise of another".[61] We experienced a backlash over the use of the word Islamophobia in the title of the report, despite our efforts to clarify how it should be used in a human rights context. Our next major report on the topic in 2015 was titled "Spotlight on Anti-Muslim Internet Hate: Interim Report",[62] which avoided a similar backlash. We began using the term Islamophobia again following the release of the "Islamophobia Defined" report by the *All Party Parliamentary Committee on British Muslim* in 2018. The report drew on our earlier reports and provided a narrow definition of Islamophobia.

Differences in the scope given to the term Islamophobia have continued with some adopting a narrower approach limited to human rights, and others taking the broader approach which includes speech many liberal democracies regard as being protected free speech. The term anti-Muslim hatred, by contrast, is consistently understood to have the narrower human rights based meaning that accurately describes the type of prejudice towards Muslims that is the subject of this report. More recently, there is an increasing shift in some countries towards "anti-Muslim racism", which comes with its own implications, limiting the scope in some ways but expanding it in others.

We hope that our use of the term "anti-Muslim hatred", or simply "anti-Muslim hate" in this report narrows the scope in a way that makes this research useful to commentators on all sides of the political spectrum as they engage with these human rights violations and seek to

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[60] Andre Oboler, *Islamophobia on the internet : the growth of online hate targeting Muslims* (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2013). https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1971792213/view
[61] Ibid, 8.
[62] Andre Oboler, *Spotlight on Anti-Muslim Internet Hate: Interim Report* (Online Hate prevention Institute, 2015). https://ohpi.org.au/anti-muslim-hate-interim-report/

better protect the Muslim community from hate speech and its negative impacts on Muslims and society at large.

In the remainder of this section of the report we consider a range of factors related to the differences in usage, scope, and understanding of the terms "Islamophobia", "anti-Muslim hate", and "anti-Muslim racism". The language used, particularly in regulatory contexts, may have strong implications for both the scope and acceptability of efforts to address hate speech targeting Muslims. Questions of terms and definitions may also feed into broader debates and tensions between liberal and conservative politics. While such discussion and debate is important to the on-going process of shaping the ever-changing culture of our societies, it can come at the expense of slowing urgently needed reforms in areas where there is actually a wide consensus. We hope our contribution in this report adds value to these discussions, but also charts a way to work together to more rapidly address the most urgent issues of hate speech harming Muslim people today.

Popularity and usage of the terms "Islamophobia" and "anti-Muslim hate"

Both "Islamophobia" and "anti-Muslim hate" are globally accepted terms with certain connotations attached to them. The first usage of the term "Islamophobia" according to the Oxford English Dictionary dates to 1923,[63] though it was introduced to the mainstream by a 1997 report from the Runnymede Trust: *Islamophobia: A Challenge For us all*. This report documented various forms of discrimination faced by Muslims in the United Kingdom, and suggested a number of measures that the government could employ to tackle the problem.[64]

Since then, "Islamophobia" has become increasingly mainstream parlance in the United Kingdom. As mentioned, a formal definition of the term was proposed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG), with this definition being accepted by an array of academics, councils and political parties,[65] but rejected by the UK government at the time.[66]

Though first popularised in the United Kingdom, the term Islamophobia has been adopted internationally. The international Organisation of Islamic Cooperation makes frequent use of the term Islamophobia when campaigning for Muslims around the world.[67] Likewise, the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisation, a group with representatives throughout Europe, frequently employ the term Islamophobia in their activism.[68] The term is

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[63] https://www.oed.com/dictionary/islamophobia_n
[64] Comission on British Muslimsn and Islamophobia, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for us all* (Runnymede Trust, 1997).
[65] https://islamophobia-definition.com/endorsements/
[66] "Government rejects Islamophobia definition ahead of debate", *BBC,* 16 May 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48283337
[67] Bilal Kuchay, "Why Arabs are speaking out against Islamophobia in India"*, Al Jazeera*, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/30/why-arabs-are-speaking-out-against-islamophobia-in-india
[68] Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisation, *Overcoming Islamophobia – promoting Inter-religious dialogue and co-operation* (European Youth Centre, 2006). https://rm.coe.int/09000016806fd555

now also popular in the United States.[69] In Australia our report into Online Islamophobia in 2013 raised significant media attention, and in 2014 the Islamophobia Register was created and became a leading source of data on the problem, further normalising the use of the term "Islamophobia" in the Australian context.[70]

Whilst use of the term Islamophobia has become increasingly common, its adoption has not been universal. The European Commission uses the term "anti-Muslim hate" when discussing prejudice towards Muslims.[71] This is also the preferred nomenclature of the United Kingdom's Conservative party according to Kemi Badenoch, former Secretary of State for Business and Trade.[72]

Furthermore, while the term "Islamophobia" has gained some traction, those who use it often also use the term "anti-Muslim hatred" when distinguishing individual, overt acts of hatred from the broader, structural manifestations of Islamophobia (as will be discuss in more detail below). As a result, the term "anti-Muslim hatred" is still widely used, even among those who advocate for the use of "Islamophobia". An example of this can be found in a 2021 report from the Australian Human Rights Commission which discusses the term Islamophobia and the APPG definition, then discusses anti-Muslim hate, noting both overlap and differences between usage.[73] Another example is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief's major report from 2021 where both terms are used in the title.[74]

We next explore the differences in scope that have been highlighted between these two terms, and why "anti-Muslim hatred" is better suited suited to this report.

Differences in scope: Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate

While both terms are commonly used to describe prejudice directed towards Muslims, and there is a very large overlap in what they cover, they do differ in their scope. Both include hate directed against Muslim people, but the scope of Islamophobia is wider in two important ways: (1) some include criticism of Islam or offence to Islam as part of Islamophobia, (2) Some include structural discrimination that harms or disadvantages Muslims, even when there is no hateful intent, as part of Islamophobia. In this report we have opted for the more narrowly focussed "anti-Muslim hatred" which focuses only on hatred towards Muslim people.

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[69] Robin Richardson, "Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism–or what?–concepts and terms revisited", *Insted,* 2020. http://www.insted.co.uk/anti-muslim-racism.pdf

[70] https://islamophobia.com.au/about-us/

[71] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-anti-muslim-hatred_en

[72] https://twitter.com/KemiBadenoch/status/1761856858220798395

[73] The Australian Human Rights Commission, *Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims* (The Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021). https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/sharing-stories-australian-muslims-2021

[74] Ahmed Shaheed, *Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief* (United Nations Human Rights Council Report on the 46th Session, No. A/HRC/46/30, 13 April 2021). https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc4630-countering-islamophobiaanti-muslim-hatred-eliminate

Treatment of criticism towards Islam and offence to Islam

"Islamophobia" has historically been used to describe both hatred towards individual Muslims as people and criticism of Islam as a religion, which in its extreme form might be described as blasphemy against Islam. Blasphemous libel (against the Church of England) was recognised as part of the English Common Law in 1697. The words of Judge King-Hamilton Q.C. explaining blasphemy under English Law, which was limited to protecting the Church of England, can nonetheless be understood as a description of blasphemy in the broader sense. He described blasphemous libel as "words which are so scurrilous or abusive or offensive that if they are published they would tend to vilify the… religion and lead to a breach of the peace".[75] As we will discuss later, the law in liberal democracies has largely moved on from protecting religion, but it is still a large part of the discussion around Islamophobia.

Islamophobia was described in the Runnymede Trust's initial report, which first popularised the term Islamophobia, as "a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or fear of Islam – and therefore to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims".[76] This understanding of Islamophobia focuses on both negative attitudes towards Islam as a religion and negative attitudes towards practising Muslims.

The Open Society Institute's 2010 report entitled Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities defined Islamophobia as: "Irrational hostility, fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims and Islamic culture, and active discrimination towards this group as individuals or collectively".[77] Here too a hostility, fear or hatred of Islam falls squarely within the definition of Islamophobia.

Australia's Macquarie dictionary does the same, defining Islamophobia as "the irrational fear of Islam and its adherents".[78] The 2017 APPG report On Islamophobia quotes Bertie Vigden, who writes: "Anti-Islamism is not the same as anti-Muslimism, but the two are intimately connected and both can be considered constitutive parts of Islamophobia".[79]

The history of the term "Islamophobia" being used to cover both criticism of Islam as well as hatred towards Muslims has led some commentators to reject the term Islamophobia entirely. In their contribution to the APPG report, the Southall Black Sisters state "the term is riddled with ambiguities and conflates too many issues since it implies not just hatred of

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[75] Judge King-Hamilton Q.C. from his summing up in the Whitehouse v Gay News Ltd. And Denis Lemon Case heard at the Central Criminal Court, July 11, 1977. The case appears to be unreported but is quoted in the House of Lords report 23 February 1978, Col. 302. Online at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1978-02-23/debates/7541107b-6d02-4be5-bda0-1ddcae3f6c60/BlasphemyBillHl.

[76] Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for us all* (Runnymede Trust, 1997). 1.

[77] Tufyal Choudhury *et al*, *Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities* (Open Society Institute, 2010) https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2010-01/docl_11433_719284582.pdf

[78] *Macquarie Dictionary Sixth Edition – Australia's National Dictionary* (Macquarie, 2013).

[79] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 29. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

Muslims but of the religion itself".[80] The National Secular Society raise the same concern, arguing that "'Islamophobia' confuses hatred of, and discrimination against, Muslims with criticism of Islam".[81] The report also notes that Paul Giannasi, National Police Advisor for Hate Crime in the UK, objected to the term on the grounds that activism should be "about protection of Muslims' human rights rather than Islam".[82]

In an article for Forbes on how to best to characterise discrimination faced by Muslims, Nikita Malik writes "a definition that focuses on hostility to Islam (by credence of the description 'Islamophobia') as opposed to hostility against people incorporates a concern that those who criticise aspects of Islam may be prosecuted or silenced".[83] Malik distinguishes the term Islamophobia from anti-Muslim hatred by claiming the latter is more narrow, and focuses on "addressing bigotry directed at individuals, and avoid censoring debate or freedom of expression on religion".

Many believe the focus of the word "Islamophobia", and campaigns against it, should be limited to the topic of hatred towards people who are Muslims. That is, the term should not apply, and campaigns should not seek to address criticism of Islam as a religion. The APPG report, for example, pushed back on an overly broad understanding of Islamophobia by seeking to formally define the term and limit its scope. They insist that not all criticism of Islam fell within their definition, but rather it "would depend on the way in which the debate is formulated".[84] The core idea promoted by the APPG is that hostility to Islam as a religion becomes unacceptable only when it puts practising Muslims at risk or harm or impinges on their right to religious freedom: [85]

"Islamophobia does not mean 'anti-Islam' […] Islamophobia indicates the process through which Muslims are racialised and become victims of discrimination, abuse and violence on the basis of their 'Muslimness', be it real or perceived. As such, the term Islamophobia does not shield the religion from criticism, but sets the boundaries within which the criticism can be moved without racialising Muslims."

We believe the APPG definition narrows the scope of the term "Islamophobia" in a way that makes it much closer to the meaning of "anti-Muslim hate". The APPG report notes that some object to its narrowing of the term as those people believe all criticism of Islam impinges on the freedom of religion of Muslims and should therefore fall within the definition of Islamophobia. An example of this view is discussed in the report:[86]

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[80] Ibid, 31.

[81] Ibid, 34.

[82] Ibid, 35.

[83] Nikita Malik, "Instead of Islamophobia, We Should Focus on Defining Anti-Muslim Hatred", *Forbes*, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nikitamalik/2019/05/20/instead-of-islamophobia-we-should-focus-on-defining-anti-muslim-hatred/?sh=40ddf6e369e5

[84] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 35. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

[85] Ibid, 43.

[86] Ibid, 35.

'Ali and Witham further their concern about the boundaries between Islamophobia and free speech by arguing that "there is no 'good faith' criticism of Islam". Central in their argument is the concept of inseparability of race and religion, whereby an attack on the religion cannot be separated from an attack on the race because both concepts are constructs adopted "as a means of categorising colonial subjects". As such, the recourse to the notion of free speech and a supposed right to criticise Islam results in nothing more than another subtle form of anti-Muslim racism, whereby the criticism humiliates, marginalises, and stigmatises Muslims.'

The concept of protecting religion itself, any religion, from criticism or offence has fallen out of favour in liberal democracies. Blasphemy has been declared no longer valid law in Australia and was formally repealed in the UK. Criticism of religion is now considered free speech and blasphemy is at most socially unacceptable. In the online context blasphemy would form part of the large "awful but lawful" category of content that is offensive to some but does not go against community standards. Of course, other systems of laws, particularly in Muslim countries, may take a different approach to the acceptability of criticising Islam, which raises the question of whether a country block for blasphemous libel, in countries where that is the law, would be appropriate. If so, an additional question is where the line between protected criticism of religion and unlawful libel might rest.

Recommendation 11: Discussion and criticism of religion should be protected on social media under the principle of free speech, so long as it doesn't put practising adherents of a religion at risk of harm or impinge on their right to religious freedom.

Recommendation 12: Where a country makes it unlawful to communicate content that is so scurrilous, abusive, offensive, or vilifying towards a religion that it may lead to a breach of the peace, social media companies should comply with that law by geo-blocking such content in that legal jurisdiction and any others with equivalent laws.

This report focuses on hatred towards Muslims, rather than Islam. We only document hatred towards Islam when it also constitutes hatred towards Muslims. In doing so we use the distinctions we first formulated in our report Je suis humain: responsible free speech in the shadow of the Charlie Hebdo murders.[87] This distinction includes the ideas that:

- "[S]ocial media companies should prohibit all hate speech directed against people who are Muslim"[88]
- "A cartoon should not be considered hate speech merely because it depicts Mohammed"[89]
- "Cartoons portraying Muslims through negative stereotypes, using Mohammed to· symbolise all Muslims, should be considered a form of hate speech"[90]
- "Social media platform providers should not treat content which is merely critical of the ideas of Islam, but does not extend to inciting hate against all people who are

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[87] Andre Oboler, *Je suis humain : responsible free speech in the shadow of the Charlie Hebdo murders* (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2015). https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1971649835
[88] Ibid, 16.
[89] Ibid, 18.
[90] Ibid.

Muslim, as hate speech. Platform providers should not treat mere criticism of what is presented as Islamic practice by various Muslim countries as hate speech."[91]

Usage of the term Islamophobia has been far from consistent. Many groups and commentators have used the term in ways that extend primarily to hatred towards Muslims, rather than Islam. Given the lack of consensus on this point, however, employing the term Islamophobia risks some degree of uncertainty about whether it is attitudes towards Muslims, Islam, or both which are covered. Furthermore, the strategy of stipulating and using a more narrow definition of Islamophobia has been criticised by those commentators discussed above, and OHPI's previous strategy resulted in backlash. Such a backlash can undermine efforts to address anti-Muslim hatred. The terminology of anti-Muslim hatred avoids confusion makes the focus clear, which is why it is used for this report.

Treatment of structural harms from religious based hate

The term Islamophobia can also be wider than anti-Muslim hatred when it is taken, as it often is, to include the governmental and institutional forces that systematically exclude Muslims from society or disadvantage them compared to others. By contrast, anti-Muslim hate is typically taken to only refer specifically to overt, explicit hatred against Muslims.

When consulted about a definition of Islamophobia for the APPG report, Eaqualiteach stated "[i]t is important that any definition captures the fact that Islamophobia is more than just individual prejudice and includes systemic discrimination against Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from the public sphere".[92] They continue, "acknowledging Islamophobia's historical, cultural, political and sociological dimensions allows for a dynamic understanding of the phenomenon, rooted not only in its immediately observable manifestations, but also in the less evident processes that sustain it and normalise it."[93]

This dimension of Islamophobia is stressed throughout the APPG's report. Another contributor writes: '"Islamophobia is not just "an individual matter", rather, it is "part and parcel of a wider social, historical, political and cultural discourse that continues to evolve and grow". It is not just hate crimes, or visible violence, but a cultural, historical, and political trajectory that has led to the formation of an ecosystem in which anti-Muslim racism festers and manifests itself.'.[94]

In their contribution to the APPG report, Professor Salman Sayyid and Abdoolkarim Vakil write: "Islamophobia is more broadly encompassing than 'hatred'; in some contexts it may be individual and intentional, in others institutional and routinized; it is more visible in incidents, but it is grounded, and experienced, in more everyday forms and embedded in social structures".[95]

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[91] Ibid, 21.

[92] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 29. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

[93] Ibid, 29.

[94] Ibid, 31.

[95] Ibid, 44.

This understanding of Islamophobia is not without precedent. A 2004 report from the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia characterises Islamophobia in terms of "those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce inequalities in society between Muslims and non-Muslims".[96]

According to the media spokesperson for Muslim Council, Miqdaad Versi:

> "Hate is very restrictive and is only a small percentage of Islamophobia. It does not include the fundamentally important structural issues (e.g. discrimination in employment, Muslims pay more for insurance, half Muslims live in the 10% most deprived areas etc) and it does not cover conspiracy theories or tropes in the media (e.g. Muslims are terrorists / groomers etc) or in society,"[97]

While noting the importance of the structural point, we disagree with the last part of this statement. Conspiracy theories and tropes are commonly considered part of hate speech, against any group, and particularly in the online context. Work on online anti-Muslim hate in particular has included conspiracy theories and tropes (including those mentioned as examples) since the very first report in 2013.

As shown Islamophobia has often been understood to include the ways in which Muslims are systematically excluded from society at the level of governments and institutions. The terminology of anti-Muslim hatred is often said to lack this broader implication. In our view, however, some forms of systematic or structural harm do include this element of hateful intent and can and should be included under the term "anti-Muslim hate", even if the hate is not overtly expressed.

We discussed covertly expressed anti-Muslim hate of a structural form in a 2016 book chapter, describing it as a "more indirect form of anti-Muslim hate" that "seeks to exclude Muslims from society by removing or preventing the development of the infrastructure a Muslim community needs."[98] The campaign against Halal food and against the granting of planning approval for mosques are given as examples of this category of anti-Muslim hate.[99] This was a correction to our 2013 report, based on a re-examination of the same data, given that we initially noted and reported on anti-Halal Facebook pages, but did not classify them as Islamophobic due to their rules against (overt) Islamophobia which they strictly enforced. In re-examining the data, we recognised the structural impact of the actions of these groups, and the underlying hostility to Muslims that led them to these actions and reclassified them.

The confusion over the inclusion or exclusion of structural harm to Muslims may reflect a broader distinction between harms experienced based on ethnicity and harms experienced based on religious affiliation or observance. Harms based on ethnicity are racism and include structural racism. Harms based on religious affiliation or observance may include

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[96] Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, *Islamophobia issues, challenges and action* (Trentham Books, 2004) 14. http://www.insted.co.uk/islambook.pdf
[97] Anmol Irfan, "Debating Hatred: Islamophobia or Anti-Muslim Hate?" *Media Diversity Institute*, 2021. https://www.media-diversity.org/debating-hatred-islamophobia-or-anti-muslim-hate/
[98] Andre Oboler, "The Normalisation of Islamophobia through Social Media: Facebook", in Imran Awan, *Islamophobia in Cyberspace: Hate crimes go viral* (Routledge, 2016) 56.
[99] Ibid, 56—57.

religious vilification, and protections in specific areas such as employment and housing, but this is a much more limited and proscribed concept. Work published by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency in Germany in 2010 noted that "Qualitative data suggest that persons who follow the Islamic faith encounter interpersonal and structural discrimination, to begin with, mostly as a result of their (ascribed) ethnic origin" and that in the workplace "internal regulations and practices can render it disproportionately difficult to observe religions commandments and can therefore lead to structural discrimination. However, this has so far not been researched."[100] A structural privilege towards the established or dominant religion is an accepted norm and part of the culture in many liberal democracies. Accommodations may be made, but often only so long as they don't adversely impact the existing culture or become overly burdensome.

Some suggest structural racism may be included under "Islamophobia" or "anti-Muslim racism", but not under the concept of "anti-Muslim hate". The Australian Human Rights Commission, for example, wrote in 2021 that, "While the term 'anti-Muslim hatred' does not capture structural forms of discrimination and prejudice against Muslims, it has been argued that this term more precisely refers to the deliberate project of inciting hatred against Muslims, which is frequently conducted through dehumanisation and conspiracy theory. The term 'anti-Muslim hatred' can also more precisely describe the responses generated within online communities to dehumanise Muslims through their anti-Muslim reporting."[101] Reporting here does not mean reporting the hate to the platform, but rather reporting on (as in writing about) Muslims in a negative manner.

The inclusion or exclusion of structural discrimination is a particular issue around the media, which in structural racism is often considered one of the oppressive societal forces harming minorities. On the other hand, some have worried that a commitment to reducing Islamophobia in this wider sense threatens the free press. The Policy Exchange report cites a number of cases in which the media have been charged with Islamophobia and worried that an official definition of Islamophobia would problematically restrict media coverage.[102] Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner has noted how the media can also be a force to counter structural racism and called for the leadership of media organisations to support journalists when they do this. In comments which referenced anti-Arab and Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, racism against First Nations people, and anti-Asian racism, he wrote, "One problem is that our discussions of racism usually focus only on the tip of the issue - overt racism - and we ignore the massive iceberg that lies underneath, the systemic and structural elements… Systemic racism can be less easy to identify than overt racism. When people don't recognise racism in action, they leave it unchecked, or continue

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[100] Dorothee Frings and Mario Peucker, *Discrimination in Employment owing to Islamic Religious Affiliation: Findings, questions and recommendations for action* (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA), 2010). https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/forschungsprojekte/EN/Expertisen_Diskr_aufgr_islam_ReligZugehoerigk_en.html

[101] Australian Human Rights Commission, *Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims* (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021). https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/sharing-stories-australian-muslims-2021

[102] Trevor Philips *et al, On Islamophobia* (Policy Exchange, 2019) 66. https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/On-Islamophobia.pdf

to perpetuate it…. When people in positions of power challenge racism and stand up to those who would silence such conversations, it sends a powerful message."[103]

Another area of specific concern around structural racism that impacts Muslims is governmental counter-terrorism initiatives. As one contributor to the APPG report says: "Any definition of Islamophobia has to recognise that Islamophobia is perpetuated in political rhetoric and a broad range of policy measures. So, it's perpetuated in counter-terrorism […]".[104] As a result, the Policy Exchange report raises concerns that a commitment to tackling Islamophobia might threaten national security by compromising these counter-terrorism initiatives. This tension is also seen in Australia where being motivated by a "religious, ideological or political cause" is an element in the definition of a terrorist act.[105] The Australian Muslim Advocacy Network, a civil society organisation, has campaigned to change this and remove the reference to a religious cause.[106] In a paper on the topic their legal advisor claimed that, in some cases, "Australia's terrorism definition situates Islam and its sacred texts as the cause" of terrorism.[107]

It is of course an important question whether there are power structures that inform or are ultimately responsible for individual instances of anti-Muslim hate. Similarly, it is important to know the role that individual instances of anti-Muslim hatred have on contributing to societal structures and power dynamics that systematically discriminate against Muslims. But answering these questions is outside the scope of this report, which documents and analyses prejudice against Muslims at the level of individual social media communications. Advocates of the Islamophobia terminology and a broader focus routinely stress that Islamophobia constitutes more than religious vilification against Muslims. We don't disagree, but beyond this discussion, our focus is limited to online expressions of hate, that is religious vilification against Muslims.

The one form of structural Islamophobia that is directly relevant to this report is the question of whether the policies social media companies use to identify anti-Muslim hate speech, and the training of their staff to implement those policies, are sufficiently effective. This directly relates to whether the take down rates of anti-Muslim hate are sufficient. We are pleased to have worked with Meta and YouTube, sharing our data with them, so they can better understand the hate we are seeing and could use this understanding to systematically improve their efforts. In this respect our work addresses structural Islamophobia (and we argue a form of structural discrimination that falls within the scope of the term "anti-Muslim hate") in the online world. The publication of this report continues this work and may aid

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[103] Giridharan Sivaraman, "Race Discrimination Commissioner: Why ABC chiefs should back Laura Tingle for calling out racism", *The Age,* 29 May 2024. *https://www.theage.com.au/national/why-abc-chiefs-should-back-laura-tingle-for-calling-out-racism-20 240529-p5jhlq.html*

[104] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 44. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/154 3315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

[105] *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 100.1.

[106] https://www.aman.net.au/research-priorities/

[107] R. J. Markwell, "Religion as a Motive Does Australian Terrorism Law Serve Justice?" 12(3) International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy, 1-14, 2023, 1. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.2686

other companies. We are happy to meet with technology companies and to share the data behind this report with the other platforms the data was collected from.

Recommendation 13: Those addressing structural Islamophobia should include a focus on social media policies related to anti-Muslim hate and the effectiveness of takedown rates of this content.

The implication of discussing harms to Muslims as racism

Since the introduction of the term "Islamophobia" into the mainstream it has come to be defined by some as a form of racism against Muslims. A prominent advocate for this interpretation is Professor Tariq Modood, who has argued that groups can experience racism on the basis of their perceived culture and religion, as well as their biology.[108] An implication of this view is that hatred towards Muslims qualifies as a form of racism.

Back in 2002 the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism in the UK noted a "shifting focus of bigotry" from race to religion.[109] They explain how, "Throughout the 70s and 80s the Muslim community in Britain, along with other minority communities, suffered from the activities of far right organisations on the basis of their race affiliations. Since the 90s, however, such suffering has significantly intensified as the activities of far right organisations have become noticeably more weighted against Muslim communities, only this time, on the basis of religion."[110] This change was likely a response to greater anti-racism efforts and laws, and a corresponding gap when it came to religious vilification.

This issue was picked up by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's Observatory on Islamophobia in 2008 when they noted that Islamophobia goes beyond an "irrational or very powerful fear or dislike of Islam" and "involves racial hatred, intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping".[111]

Written on about anti-Muslim jokes in 2011, Simon Weaver referred to them as a form of "anti-Muslim racism" and explained this in terms of cultural racism, where the arguments about the culture a group shares becomes the basis for attack rather than argument about their biology, as occurs in biological racism.[112] Weaver explains a preference for anti-Muslim racism in relation to these jokes saying they "do not express fear or make explicit reference to Islam in all cases. They are, however, both anti-Muslim and racist."

Islamophobia is increasingly presented as a form of racism. For example, a more recent report in 2017 from the Runnymede Trust, the organisation that first popularised the use of

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[108] Tariq Modood, *Multicultural politics: Racism, ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain* (Vol. 22. U of Minnesota Press, 2005). Chapter 1.
[109] Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales, *Annual Report January 2001-March 2002* (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, 2002).
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldselect/ldrelof/95/2101702.htm
[110] Ibid.
[111] Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, *1st OIC Observatory report on Islamophobia, May 2007-March 2008* (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008) 9.
https://tandis.odihr.pl/bitstream/20.500.12389/20294/1/05011.pdf
[112] S. Weaver, "A rhetorical discourse analysis of online anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic jokes", Ethnic and Racial Studies, 36:3, 483-499, 2013. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2013.734386

the term Islamophobia, featured an updated definition of the term with the "short" version simply defining Islamophobia as "anti-Muslim racism".[113]

This understanding of Islamophobia culminated in the widely adopted definition suggested by the APPG on British Muslims, according to whom "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."[114]

The understanding of hatred against Muslims as a kind of racism has, however, been controversial. The report On Islamophobia: The Problem of Definition by Policy Exchange criticises the "conflation of religion and race", claiming that the APPG's definition of Islamophobia "blurs the line between two concepts that have hitherto been kept apart – for very good reason".[115] Chair of the Conservative Muslim Forum, Mohammad Amin, argued that "[t]he man in the street knows that Muslims are not a race" and asks "how can you be racist against Muslims?"[116]

Other commentators have defended this characterisation of Islamophobia. Modood uses analogies with antisemitism and anti-Bosnian racism to argue that prejudice towards Muslims should be considered a form of racism.[117] In its 2002 report, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism noted how the law treats mono-ethnic faith communities as ethnic groups, and therefore protects them from racism, while not protecting non-ethnic or multi-ethnic religious groups as they don't form a single ethnic community.[118] They argue this produced "a hierarchy of protected faith communities" and left faith groups like Muslims and Christians unprotected.[119] Two of the solutions they discussed to raise the protection of religious people of all faiths from harm due to their religious practise were laws against religious vilification and laws against workplace discrimination on the basis of religion.[120]

Anti-Muslim hate, as we use the term, does not rely on accepting this hate as a form of racism, but rather addresses the issue of religious vilification. Our identification of various kinds of anti-Muslim hate, and our imperative to stop them, should not depend on analogies

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[113] Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: Still A Challenge for us all* (Runnymede Trust, 2017) 1. https://assets-global.website-files.com/61488f992b58e687f1108c7c/61bcd30e26cca7688f7a5808_Islamophobia%20Report%202018%20FINAL.pdf

[114] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 50. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

[115] Trevor Philips *et al*, *On Islamophobia* (Policy Exchange, 2019) 65. https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/On-Islamophobia.pdf

[116] Mohammed Amin, "It is time to abandon the word "Islamophobia""*Conservative Home*, 2019. https://conservativehome.com/2019/02/05/mohammed-amin-it-is-time-to-abandon-the-word-islamophobia/.

[117] Tariq Modood, *Islamophobia: A form of cultural racism*. (Submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims in response to the call for evidence on 'Working Definition of Islamophobia, 1 June, 2018). https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/consultations-page/Modood%20Islamophobia_AAPG.pdf

[118] Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales, *Annual Report January 2001-March 2002* (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, 2002). https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldselect/ldrelof/95/2101702.htm

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

to other forms of hate. It is enough to identify this as a form of hate that harms a particular group of people, and that it therefore needs to be addressed. We believe this to be uncontroversial and hope it is a position all can agree on and collaborate in addressing.

When asked by the APPG about the term Islamophobia and possible alternatives, the APPG report quotes Modood as saying:

> "The other term is anti-Muslim racism, but the reason why I've used Islamophobia is that it took off. If something is there, and already has traction, then we are weakening the political will and capital that has been created over time by saying "throw that away let's start again."[121]

Today both "Islamophobia" and "anti-Muslim hatred" are commonly used terms, with "anti-Muslim hatred" also frequently employed by those who advocate for the use of "Islamophobia". Using the term anti-Muslim hatred is therefore not "starting again", but is a pragmatic choice that is more precise for the purposes of this report. For other work and campaigns, particularly those addressing structural harms, the term "Islamophobia" or "anti-Muslim racism" may be more appropriate. "Islamophobia" has wider scope and may be more pragmatic for certain purposes, but "anti-Muslim racism" avoids the concerns around over-reach related to criticism of Islam itself.

Recommendation 14: Where the term Islamophobia is used, a definition should be provided. In countries where criticism of religion is regarded as within free speech, we recommend adopting the APPG Working Definition of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia, Anti-Muslim Hate and Sharia

Many discussions around anti-Muslim hate make references to Sharia law. Misunderstanding around Sharia law and its role in different societies can lead to disinformation that contributes to anti-Muslim hate. Conversely, reasonable discussion on Sharia law can be misinterpreted as anti-Muslim hate.

In this section we provide a brief overview of Sharia law and the role it can play in different countries. Please note that in this section, we comment on Islam as an all encompassing way of life and the religion per se rather than the individual. As such, using the term Islamophobia based on our previous discussion may be more appropriate in relation to some of the content which relates to a fear of Islam itself.

Sharia literally means 'the way' and for Muslims represents the sum of all laws, ethics, rules and regulations that govern the individual's personal life but also the relationship to the state, society and the divine. Sharia law as such is a very comprehensive legal system that covers criminal laws; civil laws including family law, inheritance and commercial law; public law; and rules of military engagement. It also includes rules on hygiene, dietary practices and liturgy.

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[121] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 39. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

Legal systems using Sharia law

It is important to note that Sharia is not necessarily a static, monolithic and homogenic legal system. Indeed, there are significant variations on how it is implemented. For instance, countries can implement Sharia law in different ways including:

Classical Sharia Systems

- Sharia as national law: Sharia is the foundation of the legal system and is applicable nationally, i.e. Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia.
- Limited geographical application: Sharia law is practised in some territories but not the whole country, i.e. northern Nigeria.
- Non-permissibility of legislation antithetical to Islam: some countries have explicit prohibitions on laws that contravene Islamic law, i.e. Pakistan, Iraq, Iran

Mixed Legal Systems

- Limited personal application: Sharia law is applicable for Muslims only. This model exists in both Muslim majority countries e.g. Malaysia,[122] and in countries where Muslims are a minority e.g. Singapore. Mixed application: secular legal system but with some Islamic influences, i.e. Azerbaijan, Chad, Senegal, Somalia, Tajikistan, Türkiye.

Moreover, the substance of what parts of Islamic law are being implemented can vary significantly. We'll next outline some of these areas and provide an overview of what implementing Sharia law in this area might mean.

Areas of Sharia law

Islamic economy and commercial law

The Islamic economy (halal economy) represents 2 billion Muslims with about US$2.29 trillion of consumer spending in 2022.[123] The halal (Arabic for permissible) economy covers a range of sectors that are affected by Islamic ethics and law such as finance, food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, media, travel and recreation. Islamic banking and finance have traditionally been the driver for the halal economy. Islamic banking and finance differs significantly from conventional banking and finance as it prohibits interest (riba) and investing in haram (forbidden) goods and services such as trading in alcohol and the prohibition of maisir (gambling) and gharar (risk, uncertainty and hazard, such as lotteries and economic activities that involve uncertainty).

Despite requiring a completely different banking and finance system, even non-Muslim countries have been heavily investing in Islamic banking and finance, establishing

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[122] T. Lindsey,, and K. Steiner, "Islam, Law and the State in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Brunei: Volume 3.", Islam, Law and the State in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Brunei 3, 2012. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2342509

[123] *The Global Islamic Economy 2023/24 Overview* (DinarStandard, 2024). https://salaamgateway.com/specialcoverage/SGIE23

institutions and offering financial products that are compliant with Sharia. Islamic banks have been licenced and operated in non-Muslim countries such as the UK, Germany, and Singapore. Islamic compliant financial products especially sukuk (Islamic bonds) are offered in non-Muslim countries such as Luxemburg, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Africa.

Efforts to establish a halal economy have at times faced significant criticism and backlash. This opposition has at times been a manifestation of indirect hate especially against the halal certification of products. This hate speech has attempted to link efforts to offer such products, which simply add diversity to the marketplace, to claims of "Islamisation efforts" of non-Muslim countries, and accusations they will allow funds to be funnelled into terrorism.[124] In the case of food products, opposition is often framed either around food having been blessed, or by claiming the method of slaughter for meat is cruel - though Sharia law allows animals to be stunned before being slaughtered.[125]

Islamic personal law

Islamic personal laws regarding marriage, divorce and inheritance are implemented in Muslim-majority countries like Egypt, Malaysia and Morocco as well as Muslim minority (non-Western) countries such as India, Singapore, and the Philippines. These laws vary significantly in their substance depending on the major school of thought (maddhab) followed in the country and local customs.

Many non-Muslim Western countries have become more culturally, religiously and ethnically pluralistic in recent decades and approaches by these countries towards the request of Muslim minorities to have personal disputes adjudicated under Islamic law are diverse and times vary at the sub-national level with regional governments in the same country taking different approaches. In Canada, Islamic personal law was banned in the province of Quebec, while the province of Ontario considered faith-based arbitration in the early 2000s. The consideration faced significant political and social backlash, and legislative reforms were initiated that prevented the implementation of arbitration that would allow disputes to be settled under Islamic law. In the UK, Muslim Arbitration Tribunals adjudicate over matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance if both parties agree to the process. Israel allows personal family law matters to be adjudicated in religious courts, a process that is available to Muslims, Jews and Christians.

In other countries such as Germany, Islamic family law can become directly applicable under its rules of private international law and the law of origin concept (nationality) limited by the rules of German public order, or indirectly under optional law where the parties chose to have certain matters regulated according to Islamic law, i.e. notarising a will that contains the classical Islamic inheritance rules of women only receiving half a share of the inheritance of males.

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[124] Randa Abdel-Fattah, "Australia: Is halal food funding terrorism?" *AlJazeera*, 2 May 2015
https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/5/2/australia-is-halal-food-funding-terrorism
[125] Masuma Rahim, "It isn't just halal slaughter that Britain needs to make more humane", *The Guardian*, 31 October 2017.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/30/halal-slaughter-more-humane-animal-welfare-lancashire

There has been considerable controversy and debate in the area of Islamic criminal law on the one hand and on the other hand international human rights norms and diverse Western criminal law traditions. This conflict is based on the assumption that both, Islamic law and international human rights law, have an intrinsic self-explanatory meaning attached to them that transcends geographical, cultural and temporal boundaries. In essence, the assumption is that there is only one conceptualisation of the norm either in international human rights law or in Islamic law as such a clash of civilization arguably appears to be unavoidable.

Crimes according to Islamic criminal law can be categorised according to their punishment:

- Hudud refers to a fixed punishment for crimes according to the Quran or sunnah and is applicable to only five crimes with prescribed punishments: theft with amputation of the hand; highway robbery with punishments of crucifixion, death penalty, amputation and banishment depending on circumstances; intoxication punishable by 40 lashes; illegal sexual intercourse (zina) and if the offender is muhsan (free adult Muslim) death by stoning or 100 lashes if the offender is not a Muslim; false accusation of zina punishable by 80 lashes; and apostasy punishable by death. It is noteworthy that these crimes have a high threshold of proof, confession and witness testimony and that repentance is a grounds for exemption.
- Qisas refers to crimes where the victim or the victim's family can see retributive punishment or retaliation in cases of homicide or bodily harm. Alternatively financial compensation under diya can be sought.
- Ta'zir refers to all other crimes, i.e. where the strict requirements for hudud are not fulfilled and where conduct is prohibited under the Quran but no specific punishment is prescribed.

Only Muslim majority countries have passed legislations on Islamic criminal laws. Even in these instances, the implementation of Islamic criminal law is limited in regards to the punishments and crimes that can be sanctioned.

In Malaysia for instance, the two states of Kelantan and Terengganu have passed Islamic criminal laws with huddud punishments but are prevented from implementation due to constitutional constraints. Indeed in Malaysia, there are significant differences from state to state as to how an apostate, i.e. a Muslim who seeks to leave Islam is to be treated. Some states have enacted legislation that sets out forms of treatment ranging from education and rehabilitation (Malacca), while some others treat the act as an offence thus subjecting them to fines or imprisonment; other states have established bureaucratic procedures for such a conversion (Perak), while some states left the matter unregulated. Moreover the name for the offence varies ranging from apostasy, attempt to commit apostasy or contempt of religion.

In Indonesia, Aceh has enacted certain aspects of Islamic criminal law with punishments limited to fines, caning and imprisonment. There are no provisions for capital punishments, especially death by stoning.

Brunei, passed the Syariah Penal Code in 2013 consolidating various crimes under other Islamic codes and the criminal code and filling in regulatory gaps. Arguably as a concession to international criticism, an existing moratorium on the death penalty was extended to capital offences under the SPCO 2013.

Saudi Arabia does not have a criminal code as such but is currently in the process of drafting such a code. A leaked draft has already been criticised internationally and it remains to be seen whether the hudud crimes will remain in their current form.

Hate Speech about Sharia law

Discussion involving criticisms of Sharia law may be an offence in countries that adopt certain aspects of Sharia criminal law, but would be protected speech in a Western liberal democracy. This is akin to the issue of certain lese majeste provisions for instance in countries such as Thailand, Cambodia and Brunei where someone criticising the ruler would face criminal charges.

The diverse ways Sharia is implemented, even in Muslim majority countries, means that it doesn't follow that allowing one element of Sharia law would automatically mean others would follow.

As such allowing dispute resolution under Sharia law, where both parties freely consent, is very different to imposing sharia criminal law. Indeed allowing a choice of law in personal law or commercial law has no impact on any other area of law.

Campaigns that seek to oppose Sharia compliant options in the marketplace, whether there is no justifiable grounds for it other than it being Sharia compliant, may be little more than an attempt to make a country or locality less friendly to Muslim people. A Sharia compliant service would still need to meet the same regulatory requirements as other products in the marketplace, the Sharia requirements are simply an additional voluntary scheme they adopt.

Content often mislabelled as anti-Muslim hate

As this report indicates, online anti-Muslim hate is a persistent and serious problem. Still, it is possible to wrongly label content as anti-Muslim hate. This section discusses examples that do not qualify as anti-Muslim hate, given our understanding of the term.

Criticising Muslims

It is possible to criticise individual Muslims, just as it is possible to criticise anyone else, without engaging in anti-Muslim hate. In order for content to qualify as anti-Muslim hate, the criticism must be *based on* the person's Muslim identity. The post must therefore imply criticism applies generally to all Muslims who would be, by the logic of the post, equally deserving of the criticism. This can also occur when criticism is specific to an individual Muslim, but many such incidents are promoted in a manner that cumulatively exhibit a selection bias either only or disproportionately focusing on Muslim people.

For example, the following post would not be viewed as anti-Muslim hate, despite the fact that it features criticism of a well-known Muslim:

Waleed aly is the biggest sell out and a shame to journalism in this country

3:04 PM · May 25, 2024 · **379** Views

While this post does criticise an individual Muslim, the criticism is not based on their Muslim identity. The post does not mention Waleed Aly's religious views, and there is nothing to suggest the post is motivated by a dislike of Muslims in general. As a result, this post does not qualify as anti-Muslim hate.[126] If it were posted by an account focused exclusively on criticising Muslims, the account might be engaging in anti-Muslim hate. There are exceptions, for example an account doing this in a space (e.g. an online group) or platform (e.g. a dedicated online forum) that was internal to the Muslim community may have a legitimate reason for only focusing on Muslims that is unrelated to hate.

It is not always easy to tell why an individual Muslim is being criticised, and whether or not the criticism constitutes anti-Muslim hate. A negative post towards a Muslim might contain no *explicit* reference to their religion, but implicit or contextual factors might suggest that this is actually the basis of the criticism. These posts would still qualify as anti-Muslim hate because the user is still criticising an individual Muslim on the basis of their Muslim identity, even though this prejudicial motivation might not be immediately obvious. Addressing context like this can be difficult in today's online reporting systems.

Criticising extremism that claims to be Islamic or Islamist in nature

Not all criticism of extremism that self proclaims itself to be Islamic or Islamist automatically qualifies as anti-Muslim hate. It is possible to be critical of terrorist attacks that the perpetrators claim to have committed in the name of Islam without engaging in anti-Muslim hate. The key is avoiding repeating their assertion that they speak for the Muslim community, or that other Muslims share their extremist views or values.

As an example, the following post would not automatically be considered anti-Muslim hate, though it does feature criticism of extremism:

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[126] As an aside, an interview with Waleed Aly discussing the Online Hate Prevention Institute's first report into anti-Muslim hate can be heard at:
https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/radionational-drive/muslims-trolled/5147632

Hamas terrorists murdered hundreds of civilians on 7/10.

Hamas must be destroyed!

0:14

From [REDACTED]

6:54 AM · May 27, 2024 · **2,578** Views

💬 20   🔁 99   ♡ 185   🔖 8   ⬆️

The reason this post does not qualify as anti-Muslim hate is that there is no generalisation claiming the extremists represent all Muslims. In the United Kingdom, multiple polls indicate that the majority of Muslims have no desire to see their religious views imposed on the country as a whole or to reduce the rights of non-Muslims.[127] It is therefore possible to criticise specific extremist groups, or people, without criticising all Muslims in the process. A criticism of an extremist who happens to be Muslim, and claims to be acting in the name of Islam, can be based on their actions and beliefs without implying other Muslims accept this. .

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[127]Khalid Mahmood *et al, A definition of Islamophobia,* (Policy Exchange, 2024) 15.
https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/A-definition-of-Islamophobia.pdf

Furthermore, to condemn all such criticism as anti-Muslim hate would be to significantly threaten free speech. Any reasonable conception of free speech involves the right to condemn violent terrorist attacks, though requiring that it be done in a manner that avoids implicating the wider community that happens to share a faith or ethnicity with the extremists is also reasonable. In order to maintain free-speech, then, we should not view all critiques of extremism by groups that claim to be Islamic or Islamist as anti-Muslim hate.

It is important to keep in mind that posts criticising extremism from such groups can easily qualify as anti-Muslim hate by implying, either explicitly or implicitly, that these extremists are representative of the wider Muslim community. Such an implication would in fact constitute criticism of all Muslims by tarring them with an unfair and inaccurate extremist brush. This is a common way such posts move from fair comments into anti-Muslim hate.

For example, the following post criticises supposed violence perpetrated by "thugs of the Islamic Republic" on X. Red claims that this is now happening "on the streets of Sadiq Khan's London with impunity". This user implies that Sadiq Khan, the Muslim Mayor of London, is somehow enabling or sympathetic towards such violent extremism. This post can be considered anti-Muslim hate because it draws a false connection between extremists that claims to be Islamic or Islamist and other Muslims like Sadiq Khan.

Criticising Islam

As the name suggests, "anti-Muslim hate" is hate directed at Muslims. But we do not view all criticism of Islam, the religion, as anti-Muslim hate. This is a point of broad consensus among experts. The All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG) have been at the forefront of arguing for a broader understanding of Islamophobia that includes more than is traditionally viewed as anti-Muslim hate, but they agree that not all criticism of Islam should be condemned as prejudicial or unacceptable. They write:

> "Let us be clear, the aim of establishing a working definition of Islamophobia has neither been motivated by, nor is intended to curtail, free speech or criticism of Islam as a religion. […] Criticism of religion is a fundamental right in an open society and is enshrined in our commitment to freedom of speech. We also received theological opinion which outlined the long Islamic history and classical tradition of debate, discussion, and dissenting opinions within Islam. No open society can place religion above criticism and we do not subscribe to the view that a working definition of Islamophobia can or should be formulated with the purpose of protecting Islam from free and fair criticism or debate."[128]

There are good reasons for criticism of Islam, or any other religion, to be allowed. Firstly, as the quoted passage from the APPG suggests, a traditional component of free speech includes the right to criticise religion. To withhold this right in the case of Islam, by categorising all criticism of Islam as anti-Muslim hate, would constitute a significant rejection of free-speech and effectively reintroduce a law against blasphemy. All considerations in favour of free speech therefore also count in favour of a more narrow understanding of anti-Muslim hate that does not extend to all criticism of Islam.

Secondly, categorising all criticism of Islam as anti-Muslim hate would undermine the significance of work on anti-Muslim hate that targets people, such as this report. As most agree that some criticism of Islam is acceptable, if a high amount of "anti-Muslim hate" was in fact criticism of Islam, the entire effort against anti-Muslim hate might be too easily dismissed or ignored. Demonstrating the prevalence of "anti-Muslim hate" in this wider sense, including criticism of Islam, would have less chance of motivating the changes that are so urgently needed.

Finally, a wider understanding of anti-Muslim hate would disproportionately silence other marginalised groups like women, LGBTIQ+ members and ex-Muslims. Aldreabi and Blackburn show that online spaces for these groups contain disproportionately high criticism of Islam that does not involve hatred towards Muslims.[129] This criticism covers topics like

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[128] All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined: The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia* (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018) 11. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf

[129] E. Aldreabi and J. Blackburn. "Enhancing automated hate speech detection: Addressing islamophobia and freedom of speech in online discussions." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*, 2023, 644-651. https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3625007.3627487

Islam's treatment of women, Sharia Law, marriage practices and persecution of individuals based on sexual orientation.[130]

As a result, Aldreabi and Blackburn argue that classifying all criticism of Islam as hate speech disproportionately silences discussion within these marginalised groups. We should therefore adopt a more narrow understanding of anti-Muslim hate that allows for the possibility of legitimate criticism of Islam.

With this in mind, the following post would not constitute anti-Muslim hate given our understanding of the term. In a post to the subreddit r/feminism, this user suggests that Islam is "inherently more patriarchal than Christianity" and suggests that feminists should be just as willing to criticise Islam as Christianity. While this post is critical of Islam, this is not anti-Muslim hate.

It is also worth emphasising that Muslims are sometimes criticised because of their adherence to Islam.[131] There is a difference between criticising Islam and criticising someone for believing in or practicing Islam, and the latter can be considered anti-Muslim hate even if the former is not.

Contrastively, hatred towards Muslims can sometimes be the cause of someone's hatred or criticism of Islam.[132] The resulting critique of Islam can then also be considered an expression of anti-Muslim hate, because it is motivated by hatred towards practicing Muslims. So while critiques of Islam do not necessarily qualify as anti-Muslim hatred, caution and context are required. The two are often related, and if there is reason to think that

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[130] Ibid, 649.
[131] T. Sealy, "Islamophobia: With or without Islam?" *Religions* 12.6, 369, May 2021. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060369
[132] T. Modood, "Islamophobia and normative sociology." *Journal of the British Academy* 8.1, 29-49, 2020. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/008.029

criticism of Islam either results in or results from prejudice against Muslims, then this critique of Islam may be viewed as anti-Muslim hate.

The role of the eSafety commission

In Australia the eSafety Commissioner has jurisdiction to address complaints of cyberbullying of a child or an adult. Such bully may, in come cases, involve anti-Muslim hate. In these cases the Commissioner is able to take steps to secure the removal of the content from social media through a system that involves providing a voluntary request for removal, or a mandatory notice requiring removal. The schemes are, however, limited as they must relate to bullying of a specific individual. Content attacking Muslims in general, or indeed any other group in general, is beyond the power of the Commissioner.

The eSafety Act is, at the time of writing, being reviewed. We recommend that a new power be added to allow the eSafety Commissioner to take action on online content that incite hate against a group defined on the basis of protected characteristics such as: race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religious affiliation, caste, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity and serious disease. Does so would allow more of the anti-Muslim hate in this report to be addressed. At present very little of it would fall within the remit of eSafety.

Recommendation 15: The remit of eSafety should be expanded to explicitly include the safety of groups instead of only individuals within society that are impacted by online hate.

We also note the need, with such an expanded remit, to have someone senior in the eSafety Commissioner's office who can lead on online safety matters that fall outside of the major schemes eSafety currently administers.

Recommendation 16: eSafety should be restructured to add one or more Deputy Commissioners, and related support staff, who can maintain a focus on different areas of online safety.

Finally, we note the limitation on eSafety taking action against individuals overseas, but by the same measure there may be Australians who engage in online hate, including anti-Muslim hate, potentially in languages other than English, and potentially aimed at communities in other countries. Such people, being in Australia, will be outside the jurisdiction of the country where their hate is having an impact. Australia should do more to prevent harm internationally that comes from people in Australia.

Recommendation 17: An additional objective of the Online Safety Act should be to fulfil Australia's international human rights obligations, particularly in addressing Australian based or generated content that is causing or contributing to harms overseas.

As noted in the introduction to this report, we usually redact our data as the response to online hate can at times be more serious than the hate itself. In one case we are aware of in late 2023, a person whose video commentary involved the sort of hate speech covered in this report, was subject to doxxing and barrage of attacks that ultimately led to them taking their own life. Such serious cyberbullying is deeply problematic in its own right and is not an appropriate response to hate speech by private individuals. We believe other mechanisms,

like removal by a social media company, a government agency like Australia's eSafety Commissioner, or by the individual that posted it after mediation through a government agency like the Australian Human Rights Commission, are more appropriate responses that limit harm overall.

Counter speech in the form of comments or negative reactions to the offending post are acceptable. This is because:
1. This is a response in a form invited by the original post. By using a social media platform that allows reactions and comments they invite others to use these features in reply.
2. The original poster has the option of deleting their post, which will also remove the reactions and comments.

Where the poster is not a private individual, for example a politician, other public figure, company or organisation, a name and shame approach, including in the media, may at times be appropriate and effective. Those who put themselves in the public sphere in an effort to benefit from that attention invite public critique. This is particularly true for social media influencers at the Macro level (100,000 to 1 million followers) and Mega level (over a million followers) who have a disproportionate influence online and whose social influence power needs to be matched with a responsibility to online safety.

Recommendation 18: Campaigns to name and shame private individuals who have engaged in hate speech may amount to doxxing and cyberbullying and should be avoided. This does not apply to comments or reactions made directly to the harmful post, which the poster can stop at any time by removing the post.

Conclusion

In this report we presented and deconstructed 64 images of online hate speech. Almost all the examples were anti-Muslim hate, some involved racism against Palestinians or Arabs, some fell into both categories. The examples came from a larger pool of 1169 items of hate against Muslims, Arabs, or Palestinians and were collected from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, Telegram, LinkedIn, Gab, Reddit, and BitChute between the 27th of October 2023 and the 8th of February 2024.

The report provided an overview of the relative prevalence of this hate on each platform.This was possible as a consistent amount of time was spent collecting the data from each platform. The results showed that the level of anti-Muslim hate was disproportionately high on X (Twitter). It was also notably higher on the minimally moderated platforms Gab and Telegram. While LinkedIn has the equal-lowest level of hate, the same as YouTube, and not much lower than TikTok or Instagram. This is surprising given LinkedIn's position as a professional platform where the content may impact people's professional standing or future employment.

Graph 40 (repeat of Graph 1)
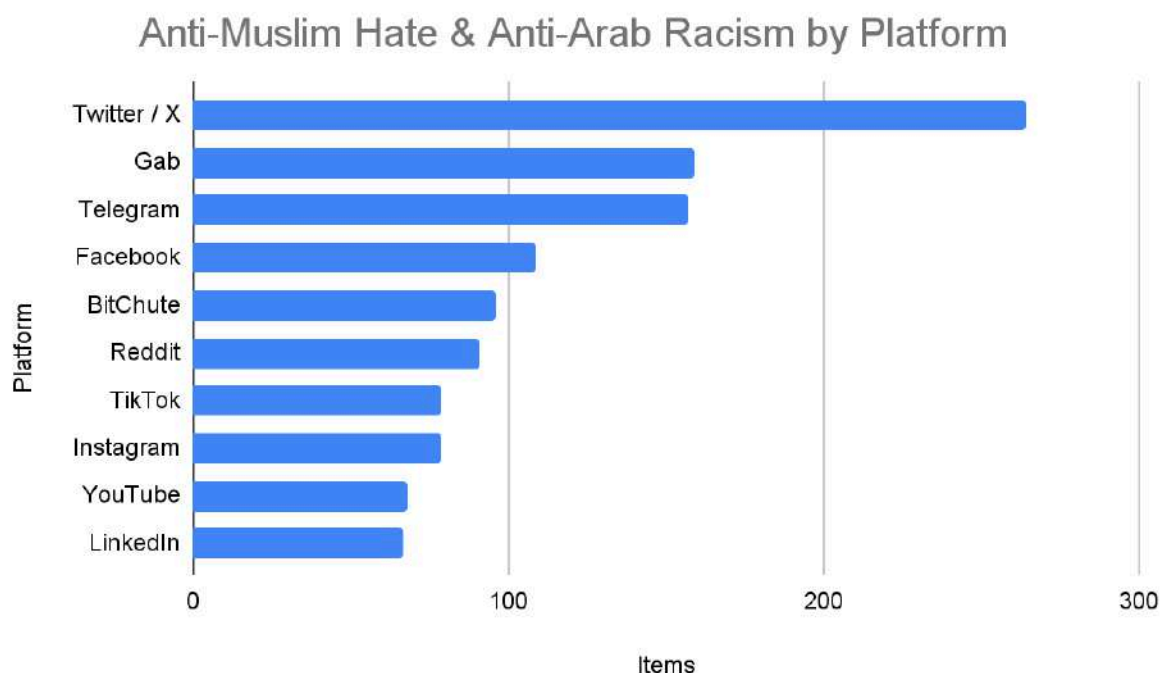
Each item we collected was also placed into one or more of 11 categories, ten reflecting different forms of anti-Muslim hate and the last category being racism against Palestinians and racism against Arabs. The categorisation data showed that the most common categories were demonising / dehumanising Muslims (35% of the data), followed by presenting Muslims as a cultural threat (33%), and presenting Muslims as a security threat (28%). Also very high was the category of "other" (35%) which included many instances of slur words (mostly "sandnigger") and imagery (mostly about sexual relations with goats) which could constitute their own category in future work. The category also includes other less common forms of anti-Muslim hate.

The report provided a detailed breakdown of how common each type of narrative was on each platform. It also looked at each category of hate and how the sample falling into that category was divided between the platforms. This detailed data can help both the platforms and government policy makers determine where the largest problems are, and can help ensure efforts to address this hate are targeted most effectively.

The report also provided the removal rate for each platform, showing how effective each platform was at removing the hate we reported to them. The figures were deeply concerning showing that between 4 months and 7 months since the data was first reported by us, the removal rate varied from a top of 54% on BitChute down to a low of 15% on YouTube.

While YouTube has a poor take down rate, it also had the equal lowest level of anti-Muslim hate. More concerning were Telegram, X and Gab which had some of the highest rates of hate coupled with some of the lowest removal rates. This situation allows hate to rapidly accumulate and spread..

Platform	% removed	Items Removed	Items collected
BitChute	54%	52	96
Facebook	50%	54	109
TikTok	43%	34	79
Instagram	39%	31	79
LinkedIn	33%	22	67
Reddit	32%	29	91
Gab	28%	45	159
Twitter / X	28%	73	264
Telegram	19%	30	157
YouTube	15%	10	68

The report included a detailed discussion of terminology and looked at the terms 'Islamophobia', 'anti-Muslim Hate', and 'anti-Muslim Racism'. We discussed the way these terms have been defined and the scope given to them by different experts. There are variations not only in the terms people use, but also in what they mean by them. We recommended the use of "anti-Muslim hate", the narrowest term, to describe work focused on online hate speech that targets Muslim people. We noted that Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hate and anti-Mulsim racism would all cover the sort of hate speech presented in this report.

We briefly discussed types of criticism that are not anti-Muslim hate, and how to recognise when they across the line into hate speech. This can occur through both explicit generalisations, and through implicit ones made through selection bias.

Some of the hate made false claims about Sharia law, and this report includes some background on Sharia law and how it is used around the world. This understanding may help readers understand where claims about Sharia law lack substance and may in fact be promoting anti-Muslim hate, for example, seeking to present Muslims as cultural threat.

The report provided 18 recommendations for platforms, governments, civil society, and social media users to help society better address anti-Muslim hate and racism against Palestinians and Muslims. One of the most critical recommendations is for Platforms to provide specific transparency reports on religious vilification against Muslims, and on other specific forms of hate. This should replace the current generic hate speech reports.

Further work is needed and we hope to secure the funding to carry out a new analysis, directly comparable to this one, with data gathered one year later. This will allow us to identify changes in the level of hate on each platform, the nature of that hate, and the effectiveness of the platforms in removing it. We invite those willing to support this work to make a donation,[133] or reach out to us.[134]

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[133] https://ohpi.org.au/donate
[134] https://ohpi.org.au/contact