

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
SPAIN
NATIONAL REPORT 2022

SERGIO GRACIA, INÉS BOLAÑOS SOMOANO

The Authors

Sergio Gracia studied law at the University of Córdoba. He holds a Master's degree in "Terrorist Phenomenology: Bioterrorism, Epidemiological Prevention, Cyberterrorism, and Chemical Threats" from the Faculty of Sciences of Granada. He is the president of CINVED (Asociación Centro Investigación de Extrema Derecha), a research centre on the extreme right in Spain. Gracia practised law in Casa Árabe Córdoba and studied at the Department of Constitutional Law. He has extensive complementary education and practical experience in the faith and plurality fields, for example in the renewal of religious thought, political Islam in Europe, social changes in the Arab world, Islamic feminism, fundamental rights, and the extreme right. Gracia is an academic collaborator with various public and private institutions in Spain, and he frequently acts as an invited expert commentator for different national and international media outlets on international relations, right-wing violence, and hate speech issues. Email: consultas@cinved.com

Inés Bolaños Somoano is a PhD candidate at the Political and Social Sciences Department of the European University Institute (Italy), and a visiting researcher at the Institute for Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University (Netherlands). Her thesis looks at the emergence and consolidation of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism (P/CVE) as a distinct policy field in the European Union. Her secondary focus is on European right-wing extremism and online radicalisation. Bolaños-Somoano is a qualitative researcher and has been involved in several researcher groups such as the Muslim World Working Group, the International Relations Working Group, and Thoughts For Europe. She also has ethnographic and professional experience within institutions, having completed a traineeship at the European Commission, DG Home, where she worked on procurement and evaluation of internal security projects. Previously, Bolaños-Somoano pursued a Bachelor's degree in English Studies in Oviedo (Spain) and an Erasmus Mundus Master of Arts in European Studies at the universities in Göttingen (Germany), Olomouc (Czech Republic), and Osaka (Japan). Email: ines.bolanos@eui.eu

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the *European Islamophobia Report* are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the *European Islamophobia Report* cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Gracia, Sergio and Bolaños-Somoano, Ines: *Islamophobia in Spain: National Report 2022*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2022*, Vienna: Leopold Weiss Institute, 2023.

Executive summary

In 2022, attacks against Spanish Muslims have continued taking place in different spheres. Some have been physical and verbal aggressions, as is the case of MP Najat Driouech (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) who was attacked by followers of the JxCAT (Together for Catalonia) political leader, Laura Borrás, just outside the Spanish parliament. There was also a prominent attack from a neo-Nazi in San Juan de Aznalfarache (Sevilla), and several anti-Muslim graffiti appeared in Valdepeñas and Málaga. Finally, there have been social media harassment campaigns.

Information from the Interior Ministry regarding 2021 trends shows an increase in hate crimes. Meanwhile, between July and August 2022, there was a 20% increment in online Islamophobia-related hate speech, according to OBERAXE data, with respect to the year prior. Furthermore, a report on teenagerhood and youth, conducted by the Centro Reina Sofía and FAD Foundation, shows that 25% of Spanish youth openly identify as xenophobic and/or racist, with Roma, Moroccans, and Muslims being the most targeted groups.

The tendency towards prohibiting the wearing of the Islamic veil due to “internal regulations” on attire repeated itself. In 2022, high schools in Spain saw a repeated violation of fundamental rights and freedoms recognised by law, further obstructing equality of right and opportunity between genders. There have been instances displaying racist and xenophobic attitudes by real estate agencies, highlighting the difficulty of access to dignified housing by Muslim and African people in Spain.

Resumen ejecutivo

Durante el año 2022 los ataques hacia los musulmanes en España se han seguido llevando a cabo desde diferentes ámbitos, ya sean estos de forma física o verbal como fue el caso de la diputada Najat Driouech por parte de seguidores de la presidenta de JxCat, Laura Borràs, a las puertas del Parlament o el del neonazi de San Juan de Aznalfarache (Sevilla), a través de pintadas como las aparecidas en Valdepeñas o Málaga, o mediante redes sociales.

Los datos aportados por el Ministerio del Interior en su informe anual referente al año 2021, muestran el incremento de los delitos de odio, algo que confirma el OBERAXE a través la monitorización de dicho discurso en las redes sociales, donde refleja un incremento de hasta el 20% en lo que respecta a las expresiones de odio relacionadas con la islamofobia en los meses de julio-agosto de 2022.

A esto debemos añadir el estudio realizado por el Centro Reina Sofía y la Fundación FAD sobre adolescencia y juventud, que indica que el 25% de los jóvenes españoles se declaran abiertamente xenófobo y/o racista. Siendo gitanos, marroquíes y musulmanes, lamentablemente, los grupos que mayor animadversión sufren.

La prohibición del velo islámico en virtud de “códigos internos” dentro de los Institutos volvió a tener lugar a lo largo del presente curso, teniendo lugar nuevamente la violación de los derechos y libertades fundamentales reconocidos por la Ley, impidiendo así la igualdad de derechos y oportunidades entre hombres y mujeres. Además de poner de manifiesto el racismo y la xenofobia que existe en el mercado inmobiliario a la hora de alquilar viviendas a personas musulmanas y/o africanas.

Country Profile EIR 2022

Country: Kingdom of Spain

Type of Regime: Parliamentary democracy

Form of Government: Constitutional parliamentary monarchy

Ruling Parties: Coalition of Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) and Unidas Podemos (coalition of several left-wing parties). Opposition Parties: Partido Popular (right), Vox (extreme right), Ciudadanos (centrist-right)

Last Elections: The last general elections, on November 10, 2019, were won by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). Results: Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE): 120/350, Popular Party (PP): 88/350, Vox: 52/350, Unidas Podemos (UP): 35/350, Catalan Republican Left (ERC):13/350, Ciudadanos: 10/350

Total Population: 47.3 million (INE, April 5, 2022)

Major Languages: Spanish (official language); Catalan, Valencian, Basque, and Galician (main co-official languages)

Official Religion: None. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 established that “there shall be no state religion”. At the same time, Article 16.3 outlines that the state will cooperate with religious authorities from several confessions, among which chiefly Catholicism.¹

Statistics on Islamophobia: The Ministry of Interior released its 2021 annual hate crime report in October 2022. The results show that there ...an increase of 401 with respect to 2020 and of 96 with respect to 2019?² Nevertheless, a report from OBERAXE, the Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia (Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia- OBERAXE)³ on hate speech in social media shows that Islamophobic incidents increased to 20% of the total hate speech in the months of July and August. This establishes a new record, given that last year, Islamophobic content constituted 14.7% of the total crimes.⁴

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: The latest statistics come from the 2022 report by OBERAXE, the Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia.

Major Religions (% of Population): Practising Catholics 19.9%; Non-practising Catholics 39%; Agnostic 11.7%; Indifferent 10.8%; Atheists 14.6%; Other reli-

1. Article 16.3 of the Spanish Constitution, “Official State’s Bulletin” (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*), https://www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/codigos/codigo.php?id=158_Constitucion_Espanola_____The_Spanish_Constitution_&modo=2 (Access date: 14 June 2022).

2. “Informe sobre evolución de los delitos de odio en España 2021”, Ministerio del Interior, 11 April 2022, <https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/pdf/servicios-al-ciudadano/delitos-de-odio/estadisticas/INFORME-EVOLUCION-DELITOS-DE-ODIO-VDEF.pdf> (Access date: 7 October 2022).

3. From here onwards referred to by its acronym, OBERAXE.

4. Information from 2022 is only available from 2023 onwards, thus it is not included here.

gions 2.6%. (Report by the Sociological Research Centre [Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS] n° 3344/2021, December 2021)

Muslim Population (% of Population): Muslims represent around 4% of the total population, counting both Spanish citizens and other residents. Forty-two per cent of Muslims are Spanish citizens, while 58% are third-country nationals (38% from Morocco and 20% from other countries). This percentage amounts to a total of 2,250,486 Muslim inhabitants.⁵

Main Muslim Community Organisations: The Comisión Islámica de España (CIE) is the sole interlocutor with the Spanish state, as well as being part of the Muslim Council for Cooperation in Europe (MCCE),⁶ a representative body in the European Union. The CIE is composed of the Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (UCIDE), the Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas (FEERI), and other minority federations.

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: Asociación de Mujeres Musulmanas Bidaya, Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de Inmigrantes, Asociación Musulmana por los Derechos Humanos, European Network of Women of African Descent, Fundación Al Fanar, Fundación Cepaim, Fundación de Cultura Islámica, Fundación Euroárabe, Fundación Ibn Battuta, Musulmanes contra la Islamofobia, Observatorio de la Islamofobia en los Medios, SOS Racisme Catalunya, SOS Racismo Madrid, Stop Als Fenòmens Islamòfobs, Unitat contra el feixisme i el racisme

Far-Right Parties

National: Vox, Hacer Nación, España 2000, Alianza Nacional, La Falange, Falange Española de las JONS, Alternativa Española, Democracia Nacional, Orden y Ley (POLE), ADÑ, Identitarios, Partido Social Patriota, Partido Nacionalsocialista Obrero Español (FNI-PNSOE), Partido Solucionista, Partido Nacional Bolchevique, Movimiento Católico Español

Local-Regional: Front Nacional de Catalunya (FNC), Movimiento Aragonés Social, Renaixença Nacional Catalana (RNC), Som Identitaris, Som Catalans

Far-Right Movements

National: Hazte Oír, Plataforma 711, Españoles en Acción, In Memoriam Juan Ignacio, Ohka, Facta, Cedade

Local-Regional: Getafe Nacional Revolucionario, El Empecinado, Resistencia Social Alcalá de Henares, Asociación Cultural Fernando III, Distrito Sur, Revolutio

5. Observatorio Andalusi, *Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana*, (Madrid: UCIDE, 2022) <https://comisionislamica.org/2022/03/14/estudio-demografico-de-la-poblacion-musulmana/> (Access date: 19 November 2022).

6. Muslim Council for Cooperation in Europe (*Consejo Musulmán de Cooperación en Europa*- CMCE) <http://www.hispanomuslim.es/panya/cmce.htm> (Access date: 9 June 2022).

España, Talavera Nuestra, Sección Asalto, Murtia Magna, Almería Nacional Sindicalista, Paso al Frente, Córdoba Nuestra, Caserna La Jabea, Alcalá 1247, Acción Juvenil Valencia, Acción Social Navarra, Acción Social Galicia, Hibera Genus, A Nosa Coruña, Caserna Don Pelayo, Asociación Cultural Alfonso I Cantabria, Tas Raices, Centro Social y Nacional Salamanca, Juventud Patriota Valladolid, Devenir Castellano, Asociación Rodrigo de Bastidas, , Valentia Forum, Somatemp, Asociación Cultural Tradicionalista Fernando III El Santo, Defensa Catalunya, Patriotes Catalans, Moviment Identitari Català (MIC). A map covering movements and parties can be found at Cinved.⁷

Far-Right Militant Organisations: Some of the above organisations, namely Bastión Frontal and Hogar Social Madrid, together with splinter groups operating under the umbrella name “Hacer Nación”, have been targeted by the Spanish courts for attacks against immigrants, Muslims, and unaccompanied minors (MENAS).

Limitations to Islamic Practices

- **Hijab Ban:** No
- **Halal Slaughter Ban:** No
- **Minaret Ban:** No
- **Circumcision Ban:** No
- **Burka Ban:** No

7. The map of the Spanish extreme right can be accessed here: CINVED, *Mapa virtual sobre la ultraderecha española*, December 2021 /<https://www.cinved.com/2022/02/22/mapa-virtual-sobre-la-ultraderecha-espanola/>, (Access date: 5 January 2023).

Introduction

There is widespread concern about the increase in hate crimes in Spanish society. This coincided with a parallel increase in social polarisation, as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns. The Public Prosecutor Office in Madrid has confirmed this trend, adding that social media networks have been and continue to be the ideal vehicle to disseminate hate speech.

The initial fraying of social relations, a consequence of the great social and economic crises brought by the COVID-19 mandatory lockdowns, has been purposefully appropriated and fed by extreme right political parties and groups, which have established themselves as the only trustworthy “truth sayers”, ironically manipulating existing social fears and inequalities by means of fake news and disinformation. The extreme right has fomented a climate of “witch hunts” against people who do not physically appear “Western” (immigrants and non-Christians). The political support given to such discourses by extreme right public figures has contributed to mainstreaming in the public eye a type of bigoted speech which legitimises the rejection of “Others”. As a matter of fact, 80% of the population has at some point listened to a fake news piece about migration.⁸ News channels and other media outlets have also contributed to the creation of a negative discourse, which binarily distinguishes between Spanish and “Others”, and stigmatises low level income migrants who are striving to improve their conditions.

By means of, first, the creation of extremist and apocalyptic messages about the present circumstances in the country, and second, the diffusion of said messages via like-minded media channels and social media, the Spanish right wing has contributed to mainstreaming a view of Islam as a monolithic, static, and reactionary religion, which furthermore is violent and hostile to other (non-Muslim) cultures. Social imaginaries continue to attribute Muslims an “Otherised” identity, linked intrinsically to stereotypes about extreme religiosity and intrinsic tendencies towards violence and (lack of) social justice. These characteristics render Muslim citizens not readily assimilated into Spanish society. Furthermore, Muslim communities are penalised for their existing cultural and social lies, and their refusal to abandon those in order to adopt certain features of Spanish mainstream society, such as Catholicism or a secular dress code in public education spaces. Integration is thus only achieved once distinctive cultural, religious, or ethnic features have been abandoned.⁹

8. “8 de cada 10 personas han escuchado bulos sobre las personas migrantes”, Oxfam Intermón, 19 July, 2022.

9. Eugenia Relaño Pastor, “¿Existen respuestas jurídicas para combatir la islamofobia?”, *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos*, Vol. 24 (2018), p. 31-48.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

Spanish Muslims have continued to suffer attacks, mostly by radical and bigoted individuals and groups, during 2022. This situation highlights the increasing reactionary wave surrounding any public or private matter related to Islam.

Among the 2022 events, we should start with MP Najat Driouech, representative of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), who was verbally attacked by supporters of the president of the political party Junts per Catalunya (JxCat, Together for Catalonia), Laura Borràs, at the doors of the Catalan Parliament; the assault of a Moroccan youth by a neo-Nazi in San Juan de Aznalfarache (Sevilla); and the hate speech graffiti painted at high schools in Valdepeñas¹⁰ and Málaga,¹¹ attacking Muslims among other targets.

These events are accompanied by direct instances of racism in other social spheres, such as the discrimination that Muslims face in the housing market. This is the case of Pape, a Spanish citizen in search of a flat, who was told by the housing agency he approached that they “did not rent [apartments] to Moors or Africans.”¹²



Figure 1¹³: Graffiti in several high schools in Valdepeñas: “Moors out” (*moros fuera*).

The article reads, “Racist and anti-feminist graffiti appear in various institutes in Valdepeña. The IES Bernardo Balbuena has been the target of various graffiti against the feminist collective and of a racist nature”.

Source: Cadena Ser¹⁴

10. “Aparecen pintadas racistas y contra el feminismo en varios institutos de Valdepeñas”, Cadena Ser, 3 November, 2022.
11. “Denuncian una pintada racista en pleno Centro de Málaga”, La Opinión de Málaga, 16 November, 2022.
12. “No alquilamos este piso ni a moros ni a africanos”, Levante-emv, 5 September, 2022.
13. All screenshots belong to the authors unless stated otherwise.
14. “Aparecen pintadas racistas y contra el feminismo en varios institutos de Valdepeñas”, Cadena Ser, 3 November 2022.

Employment

In 2003, the Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination (CEDRE) was created as a government tool for increasing equality and reducing ethnic or racial discrimination¹⁵. According to its latest report from 2020, 26% of the total perceived discrimination in the Spanish workforce is on account of racial/ethnic origin. Meanwhile, in municipalities with over 200,000 inhabitants that number rises to 30% of the total instances of perceived work-place discrimination.¹⁶

Meanwhile, according to a different report by the Spanish Observatory for Religious Pluralism (Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso), workplace discrimination on account of religious beliefs disproportionately affects believers of minority denominations. This report surveyed 1,986 people, of which 96% identified as non-Catholics (the majority religion in Spain). Among the study participants, 80.5% has witnessed some kind of discrimination in the workplace.¹⁷

From a legal point of view, the Spanish constitution enshrines freedom of one's personal outward appearance in several articles, which refer to the individual's right to dignity and to the development of their personality, whilst also recognising the right to equality and to non-discrimination due to class, race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, opinion, or any other condition.

Previous laws, such as the *Ley Orgánica de Libertad Religiosa 7/1980*, from July 5, 1980, and posterior, such as the *Estatuto de los Trabajadores a través del Real Decreto Legislativo 2/2015*, dated October 23, 2015, and the *Real Decreto Legislativo 5/2015*, dated October 30, 2015, further recognise the right of workers not to be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, due to their faith or personal beliefs, either during the selection process or once employed. Religious freedom can thus be publicly expressed through clothing or other personal belongings.

Education

The beginning of the 2022-2023 school year saw the resurfacing of fake news on the subject of "Islamic religion", which is imparted in several Spanish schools. Doctored screenshots of the supposed curriculum for the subject were distributed repeatedly on social media platforms. Thousands of users added to the controversy by falsely claiming that the socialist government was trying, via Islamic religious education, to purge Catholicism from the classrooms.¹⁸

15. Consejo para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial o Étnica (CEDRE), <https://igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es/elConsejo/>. (Access Date: 20 February 2023).

16. Consejo para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial o Étnica, *Estudio sobre la percepción de la discriminación por origen racial o étnico por parte de sus potenciales víctimas en 2020*, (Madrid: CEDRE, 2020).

17. Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso en España, *Estudio sobre la percepción de discriminación por motivos religiosos en el ámbito laboral* (Madrid: Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia, 2022).

18. "El Gobierno no ha suprimido la asignatura de religión católica para sustituirla por la islámica mediante una resolución de Educación", *Newtral*, 28 September 2022.

Several extreme right parties have echoed these false claims, and even campaigned on their opposition to the availability of Islamic religion classes in schools. Among them, the party Democracia Nacional took to Twitter on October 10 to publicly oppose this initiative.¹⁹

As in 2021, there have continued to be incidents of school pupils being expelled from school premises for wearing the hijab. These expulsions continue to be justified under the so-called internal regulations on attire. Such an incident occurred at the beginning of the year in Málaga, when some parents reported that their daughters were not allowed to go to class “after they started wearing the veil.”²⁰ The affected girls were finally withdrawn from the school by their parents, who transferred them to another one. For its part, the Junta de Andalucía, the responsible body on this case, offered the family of the two students a change to another educational centre that did not have such internal regulations.²¹

Likewise, on September 14, 2022, five pupils from the Madrid high school IES Rosa Chacel were forced to leave their classroom for wearing the hijab. The case of Madrid is particularly striking; as of 2010, almost half of all Madrid schools and high schools had a de facto veil ban in place,²² and in 2019, the same schools were allowed to outright ban hijab-wearing on the grounds that “it would help avoid problems with identification [of the pupils]”.²³

At the level of intellectual and public discussions, certain think tanks in their publications have favoured doctrines based on a presumed clash of civilisations, or a clash between Christianity and Islam. This is the case of the Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura (Institute of Security and Culture), an independent think tank created by academics who often collaborate with other conservative think tanks. Although in principle they do not have a direct link with any political party, its members have participated in conferences with politicians. Together with the former president of the government of Spain, José María Aznar, the former minister of foreign affairs, Josep Piqué, and Jose Maria Bellido, mayor of Córdoba (PP), members of Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura carried out the round table “From Istanbul to Córdoba: The Symbols of Islamism”.²⁴ Their ideological tendencies can be seen in a 2022 publication, where the editors once again turn to Samuel P. Huntington’s thesis on the contem-

-
19. Democracia Nacional, Twitter, 10 October, 2022, https://twitter.com/D_Nacional/status/1579509786659299328?s=20&t=kfg8dRQA-Iq7iTM_nLrCfA (Access Date: 12 December 2022).
 20. “Unos padres denuncian que un colegio de Málaga no deja ir a clase a su hija ‘tras ponerse el velo’”, Málaga Hoy, 7 March, 2022.
 21. “La Junta ofrecerá un cambio de colegio a la niña que lleva hiyab en Málaga”, Málaga Hoy, 8 March, 2022.
 22. “Casi la mitad de colegios e institutos de Madrid prohíben el velo”, 20 Minutos, 21 April, 2010.
 23. “Los colegios madrileños podrán prohibir el velo islámico para ‘evitar que se dificulte la identificación’”, La Sexta, 5 July, 2019.
 24. Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura, Twitter, 24 October 2020 <https://twitter.com/InstitutoSyC/status/1320007488205430785> (Access Date: 23 December 2022).

porary reconfiguration of the world order and the unavoidable fracture line between Western and Islamic civilisations in the Mediterranean. Point 6 of the document further makes this allusion clear, stating that “Ceuta and Melilla are Western cities bordering on land with an Islamic civilisation state, Morocco”.²⁵ This type of discourse coming from this particular think tank is not a new phenomenon. At the local level, members of the Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura have repeatedly “warned”, in March 2022²⁶ and previously in 2020,²⁷ about the pressure that Arab countries are exerting in order to change the status of the Mezquita-Catedral (Mosque/Cathedral) of Córdoba. Such a change would imply the official state acceptance of the Islamic nature of this historic monument.

At the university level, there are also active extreme right groups and youth platforms which orchestrate attacks against politicians and social actors. These groups are often named with references to the “Islamisation” of Europe, the Arab conquest of the Spanish peninsula, referred to in Spanish simply as the *Toma* or *Toma de Granada*, and the *Reconquista* by Christian forces which followed.

One such group is Plataforma 711 (Platform 711), named so according to its members “in remembrance of the fateful day in which Islam invaded the Spanish Peninsula”.²⁸ In the interview referenced before, the representative of Platform 711 acknowledges their political links to the Vox political party. “*We held talks with the PP, but they did not go further and for the moment the only party that has opted to give voice to this project has been Vox, coming Ortega Smith to the act and defending the rights of students who wanted to hear a speech [on the Toma de Granada] that has been excluded from that university for more than 20 years. At the moment Vox clearly supports us and we are not closed to being supported by any political party, quite the contrary.*” In terms of attacks, members of the group Platform 711 carried out and were arrested for attacks at the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Valencia. Similar acts were carried out by groups such as Bastion Frontal and Hogar Social against different politicians and party headquarters.

Politics

In a similar vein, these pseudo-historical allusions to the Arab presence in Spain are also used by political actors as rallying points. Every year on January 2, extreme right groups congregate in Granada for the celebration of the *Toma de Granada* (Conquest

25. Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura, *Ceuta y Melilla, frontera terrestre de España y de la Unión Europea en África* (Madrid: Instituto de Seguridad y Cultura, 2020), p. 76.

26. “Experto denuncia que países árabes presionan para cambiar el estatuto de la Catedral de Córdoba para incluir el islam”, Europa Press, 17 March, 2022.

27. “Un experto avisa que el islamismo usa la conversión de Santa Sofía para reivindicar la Mezquita de Córdoba”, El Día de Córdoba, 29 October, 2020.

28. “Plataforma 711: ‘Volveremos a la Complutense para hacer frente al sectarismo de la izquierda’”, La Gaceta de la Iberosfera, 30 April, 2022.

of Granada), and use this occasion to attack Islam and Muslims, both in Spain and abroad. Like-minded social media accounts echo these messages and propose plans to defeat Islam in the country.²⁹

Muslim MPs have also suffered political harassment at the hands of mainstream (non-extreme right) parties, who have incorporated anti-Muslim talking points in their political repertoires. This is the case of MP Najat Driouech, who was insulted by followers of the president of the centre-right party Junts per Catalunya (JxCat, Together for Catalonia), Laura Borràs, at the entrance of the Catalan Parliament.³⁰

At the same time, the majority of Islamophobic attacks continue coming from right-wing and extreme right-wing parties, such as Vox, España 2000, or Democracia Nacional. In the last year, above all, Vox targeted the Ceuta Muslim community,³¹ making purposefully incendiary comparisons, equating the importance of Eid al-Adha and bullfighting.³² Meanwhile, Democracia Nacional has campaigned to impede or problematise the start of “Islamic religion” classes in school in Murcia. Finally, España 2000 is continuing to push a traditional talking point for the Islamophobic extreme right in Spain, bashing MENAS, or foreign unaccompanied underage nationals. Most of their activism takes place on social media.



Figure 2: Screenshot of a Democracia Nacional Islamophobic tweet³³. The tweet reads, “Didn’t we agree to keep religion out of public education? Islamic religion classes commence in 9 primary schools”.

29. España2000, Twitter, 2 January 2022 https://twitter.com/Espana_2000/status/1477644389040242692?s=20&t=w-gkMHKR5zgRsb8MNPZV4Qw (Access Date: 17 October 2022).

30. “La diputada de ERC Najat Driouech denuncia los “inadmisibles” insultos racistas de seguidores de Borràs”, NiusDiario, 29 July, 2022.

31. Ceuta and Melilla are two Spanish cities which are located on the north coast of Africa, bordering Morocco.

32. “La ultraderecha ataca a la comunidad musulmana y compara la tauromaquia con la Fiesta del Sacrificio”, El faro de Ceuta, 21 August, 2022.

33. DemocraciaNacional, Twitter, 10 October 2022, https://twitter.com/D_Nacional/status/1579509786659299328 (Access Date: 12 October 2022).

Spanish Muslim women have also been specifically targeted. Catalanian Vox MP Sergio Macián openly bashed Muslim citizens who were renewing their national ID cards, taking a picture and posting it on Twitter, last May 31.



Figure 3: Screenshot of tweet by Vox MP Sergio Macián attacking Muslim women³⁴. The tweet reads, “Yesterday I was renewing my ID card, together with my daughters, at the Documentation Office. In the time I was there six Maghrebi families, with three or four children, entered the office, all speaking Arabic and seeking to obtain or renew the ID cards of their children, who are of course Spanish. Population replacement is real”.

Another Vox MP Sonia Lalanda, from Palencia, also took to Twitter to attack Muslim women and once again celebrate the expulsion of Muslims from Spain in the High Middle Ages.

Indeed, most Spanish extreme right parties routinely resort to (pseudo-) historical narratives about the Arab invasion and the following expulsion of Muslims from Spain. These narratives are popular, easy to sell to the local populations as positive, innocuous, objective facts, and further serve to politically whitewash and legitimise xenophobia and Islamophobic attitudes. On an identitarian basis, extreme right actors also continue to push such narratives in the pursuit of establishing a binary national identity, a (supposedly) historical “us vs them”, “Christian vs Moors”. In this context, several Vox MPs have pushed to change local holiday dates to the supposed expulsion date of Muslims in those particular territories.

34. Sergio Macián, Twitter, 31 May, 2022, https://twitter.com/sergio_macian/status/1531529159008309248?s=20&ct=mCFINMzOZfoOLw-qauDVDQ (Access Date: 17 October 2022).



Figure 4: Screenshot of Islamophobic tweet by Vox MP Sonia Lalanda³⁵. The Tweet reads, “Women in the Islamic faith better follow a “handbook of the good wife” if they know what’s good for them. Europe fought against Islam since the 8thVIII century, and in 1492 it was a woman who finally expelled Muslims from Spain. No more foolery. And bullfighting is an art form!”.

Murcia’s Vox MP, for example, has repeatedly requested for the regional holiday to be switched to February 2, the date of the *Reconquista de la Taifa de Murcia*.³⁶ In Granada, another Vox MP, Macarena Olona, claimed that January 2, the date of the *Toma de Granada*, “should be instituted as the bank holiday of the region and of the whole nation”.³⁷

The theme of the “Islamisation” of Spain is another of the central tenets of the Spanish extreme right. The Barcelona Vox party coordinator, Gonzalo de Oro, took to Twitter to claim that “some people are not aware of how dangerous this ‘goody-good’ attitude towards radical Islamists is. We must face challenges without biases or prejudice. Burying our heads in the sand only makes them grow bigger. Stop Islamisation!”.³⁸

The Islamisation discourse is seemingly prevalent among Catalanian politicians. The Catalanian Vox MP Antonio Gallego Burgos even wrote an opinion piece on this topic, in a national newspaper of great reach, the *ABC*. The headline read, “The Islamisation of Catalunya”.³⁹ The national party coordinator from Vox and regional leader of Vox Cataluña, Ignacio Garriga, has also “warned” about the Islamisation of

35. Sonia Lalanda, Twitter, 20 August, 2022, <https://twitter.com/slalanda/status/1561070196110118912> (Access Date: 17 October 2022).

36. “Vox reivindica el 2 de febrero como el auténtico Día de la Región de Murcia”, Web Vox, 2 February, 2021.

37. Macarena Olona, “La Toma de Granada, el 2 de enero, debe ser ‘Día de Andalucía’ y fiesta nacional”. *Web Vox* (January 2, 2022) retrieved 17 October 2022, <https://www.voxespana.es/noticias/macarena-olona-toma-granada-2-enero-debe-ser-dia-de-andalucia-fieta-nacional-20220102?provincia=granada>.

38. Gonzalo de Oro, Twitter, 25 October 2022, <https://twitter.com/gonzalodeoro/status/1584836343690952704> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).

39. “La islamización de Cataluña. Tribuna abierta de Antonio Gallego Burgos”, *ABC*, 30 August, 2022.

Catalonia.⁴⁰ This is not his first time denouncing the nefarious “Islamic” influence in Catalonia, having repeated this message in several interviews throughout 2022.

This discursive strategy, a result of the combined efforts of Vox members, shows an intentional approach that seeks to dominate public sphere discussions with securitised and threat-framed views of Islam. Muslim identities are “otherised”, presented as a source of historical trauma, through images of the Arab conquest and later, the Christian takeover. Contact with Muslims must be seen as a dangerous, undesirable experience to be rejected and overcome. Furthermore, Muslims are always presented as migrants and external to the country, a threat to economic progress and social justice. Thus, logically the linkage between “immigration-Islam” and “Muslim-Islamisation-invasion” is created by political actors, and spread to the population and voters via the media.

Media

Spanish media, on its part, continues to convey a partial portrait of Spanish Muslims. The situations of vulnerability experienced by Muslim women tend to be explained, in news’ coverage, through culture-oriented explanations. In other words, their grievances are framed as an inevitable result of their Islamic culture, and its assumed intrinsic inequality towards women.

Overall, news pieces speaking about Muslims focus on issues of cultural and religious practice, such as the veil or slaughter practices. Most outlets avoid treating more important issues such as fundamental rights, access to Islamic education in the public system, or discrimination in the workplace. Such bias in coverage frames Muslim citizens and their grievances in exclusive reference to their religion, without any regard to other socio-economic or political factors.⁴¹ Thus, media outlets create highly polarised debates that focus on visible symbols of “Muslimness”, such as the hijab, halal sacrifices, or men with beards, instead of material challenges.

Another important development in 2022 is the increased diffusion of fake news or openly Islamophobic news pieces, which aim to pit mainstream Spanish society against Muslim communities in Spain. These are mostly reproduced in yellow press publications, especially those affiliated or ideological akin to Vox or other extreme right political parties, such *El Manifiesto* and *Caso Aislado*.

Fake news about Muslims also occasionally appears in mainstream media as well, such as *Gaceta de la Iberosfera* and *La Razón*, which published an article titled “If Not for Our Victory in Navas de Tolosa, We Would Be Praying Today Facing Mecca”, where the term “*Reconquista*” strongly featured.⁴²

40. “Garriga advierte de la islamización de Cataluña”, *La Gaceta de la Iberosfera*, 26 January, 2022.

41. Laura Navarro García, *La Islamofobia a debate. La genealogía del miedo al islam y la construcción de los discursos antiislámicos* (Madrid: Casa Árabe-IEAM, 2012), p.145-146.

42. “Si no fuese por la victoria en las Navas de Tolosa, ‘hoy rezaríamos mirando hacia La Meca’”, *La Razón*, 16 July, 2022.

There are also newspapers which tend to copy news, changing some data, as is the case with *Mediterráneo Digital*, which this year replicated 2,017 news pieces from a different newspaper, *Infobae*, as if they were happening in 2022. Concretely, *Mediterráneo Digital* used pictures of demonstrations in third countries for a fake news article warning about Stockholm's "Islamisation".⁴³

Meanwhile, extreme right-affiliated yellow press channels continue to push fear-mongering propaganda against Muslims in Europe. *El Manifiesto* publishes a satirical "handguide" to the Islamisation of Europe. There, it claims that there are efforts "to turn Europe into a collective of stateless [people] without identity." It goes on, "Thus, while we are governed by the current elites, Europe will be increasing Muslim and African, until the inconvenient natives become a minority in their own lands."⁴⁴

In sum, media debates around Muslims citizens are simplified and surface-level. The veil is featured most prominently than any other issue, essentialising and securitising the Muslim woman, who can easily be singled out and expelled from public spaces. This can even mean preventing visibly Muslim women from studying or working, in effect condemning them to stay at home whether they want to or not. Moreover, fake news and disinformation around gender and Islam are present and accessible through different media with the radio, press, TV, and social media pushing emotional, rather than fact-based arguments about the problematics of Muslim women in Spain.⁴⁵

Justice system

Early in February 2022, the Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Murcia (High Court of Justice of Murcia) passed a judgement pointing out that the Consejería de Educación de Murcia (Murcia Education Board), headed by Vox politician Mabel Campuzano, was violating the right to religious and ideological freedom. In particular, the right of parents' to choose religious and moral education for their children fitting their personal beliefs. This judgement openly recognises the right of a family to have its children educated in Islamic religion in a public school of their community.⁴⁶

Trials with important implications for Islamophobia in Spain have taken place in 2022. First, on October 18, a trial took place against the neo-Nazi organisation Hogar Social, charged with an attack against a mosque on the M-30 highway, in Madrid, on March 22, 2016. During the attack, messages appeared that generated a cli-

43. "¿Qué sabemos sobre el contenido que afirma que en Estocolmo (Suecia) se impone la 'sharía'?", Maldita Marea, 28 July, 2022.

44. "Una guía necesaria", *El Manifiesto*, 15 September, 2021.

45. Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de Inmigrantes, *La situación de las mujeres musulmanas en España. Debates actuales, experiencias diversas y mediatización del uso del velo*, (Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de Inmigrantes, Málaga: 2022).

46. "La justicia da la razón a una familia de Murcia que reivindica el derecho de sus hijos a estudiar religión islámica en el colegio", *El País*, 14 February, 2022.

mate “of clear hostility and violence against the Muslim world”.⁴⁷ Finally, on December 14, 2022 it became known that the Provincial Court of Madrid acquitted the leader of the neo-Nazi group Melisa Domínguez of the crime of incitement to hatred related to the attack she had led against the mosque near the M-30.⁴⁸ Days later, on October 22, a woman in Artesa de Segre (Lleida) was sentenced to one year in prison on counts of verbal and physical aggression against another woman with a racist intent. This aggression took place in September 2020, when the victim was thrown to the ground, kicked, and punched, and was seized by her veil while being shouted at with anti-Muslim slurs (*mora de mierda*, “shitty moor”) and told to “go back to her country”.⁴⁹

Similarly, a man declared himself guilty and accepted a sentence of six months of prison for shouting anti-Moroccan slurs and threatening one of his neighbours that “my father will kill you”.⁵⁰ The events happened in January and August 2019.

Finally, the Spanish justice system passed its first sentence regarding the diffusion of fake news on the issue of migrants. A member of the Guardia Civil (Police Forces) was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment for disseminating fake news, for misappropriating a video of a protest in China and claiming it featured young migrants in Spain.⁵¹

Future judicial developments include a trial, set to begin in June 2023,⁵² against an individual charged with leading an Islamophobic violent group in Antas (Almería).

Internet

Disinformation and fake news continue to function as a source of suspicions and hostility towards Muslim communities, with community leaders and political representatives sheltering most of the burden. In order to target this situation, the Spanish government has proposed the creation of an independent organism tasked with overseeing and managing racism and hate speech online and in the media.⁵³

Among the fake news items of 2022, we find the case of Fátima Hamed, leader of the social movement *Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Ciudadanía* (Movement for

47. “La Fiscalía pide tres años de prisión para una dirigente de Hogar Social por islamofobia”, *El Salto*, 14 October, 2022.

48. Absuelta la líder de Hogar Social Madrid de islamofobia en el ataque a la mezquita de la M-30, *Europa Press*, 14 December, 2022.

49. “Acepta un año de prisión por agredir e insultar a una mujer por motivos racistas en Artesa de Segre”, *Segre.com*, 13 October, 2022.

50. “Un hombre acepta seis meses de prisión por insultar y menospreciar a un vecino: “Iros. Esto no es la selva””, *EuropaPress*, 8 November, 2022.

51. “Primera condena en España por difundir ‘fake news’ sobre los menores migrantes”, *El País*, 8 November, 2022.

52. “El juicio contra acusado de liderar un grupo islamófobo en Antas (Almería) se celebrará en junio de 2023”, *EuropaPress*, 24 September, 2022.

53. “El Gobierno propone crear un organismo independiente que supervise los mensajes racistas en redes sociales y medios”, *Europapress*, 26 September, 2022.

Dignity and Citizenship). In late July, she reported that a hoax attacking her was circulating in social media.⁵⁴ Throughout 2022, a political representative from the political party CUP Aisata Gumaneh, was also targeted online, via the use of the hash-tags #stopinvasion and #stopimmigration.



Figure 5: Screenshot of a Twitter account echoing the hoax against Aisata Gumaneh, political representative of CUP.⁵⁵ Tweet reads, “Everyday I am more disgusted by them [Muslims]. STOP INVASION, STOP IMMIGRATION”. The retweeted image shows a Muslim politician with the caption “The new catalans”.



Figure 6: Screenshot showing Islamophobic attacks targeting Prof. Natalia Andújar (published with her consent)⁵⁶. The Tweet reads, “This is not the worst message I have received. Impunity makes these people bolder”. The picture accompanying the tweet reads, “You are a traitor to your ethnicity. There are so many native European spiritualities you could have chosen, instead of imitating semitic desert dwellers or copying Blacks... Take note of how they treat animals, part of [God’s] creation, halal sacrifice is cruelty... Your religion is for those with 0 intellectual coefficient... Or maybe you like black semitic cocks. You are endophobic. Poor lost sheep, oh well.”

54. Fatima H. Hossain, Twitter, 24 June, 2022 <https://twitter.com/FatimaHHossain/status/1540108909301710848?s=20&t=y4Ws3qtvAmI02wsulJipyA> (Access Date: 13 October 2022)
 55. Cup Olot, Twitter, 3 May, 2019 <https://twitter.com/CUPOlot/status/1124401758808223744?s=20&t=mC-FINMzOZfoOLw-qauDVDQ> (Access Date: 25 October 2022).
 56. Natalia Andujar, Twitter, 31 October, 2022, <https://twitter.com/Natandujar/status/1587019101461008384> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).

Another hoax was distributed on Twitter by Silvia Orriols from the extreme right and xenophobic party Front Nacional de Catalunya. Orriols published a picture with five veiled women, with hijabs and burkas, with the caption “Islamic Veil Exposition in Sant Antoni. European feminists organise to promote and normalise a misogynistic and discriminatory practice. No girls, you aren’t feminists... you are Islamic.”⁵⁷

Social media sites have also served as platforms to attack prominent figures of Islam in Spain, like Professor Natalia Andújar who has suffered several attacks.

During 2022, the OBERAXE continued its mandate to monitor hate speech on the most important social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, combined, reported 388 instances of confirmed hate speech. This means a 41.2% decrease with respect to the last observed period (November 1 - December 31, 2021). Islamophobic content in specific increased by 3.6 points to 17.7% compared to 4.1% in the same period in 2021.⁵⁸

Figura 1. Porcentaje de comunicaciones realizadas a cada plataforma

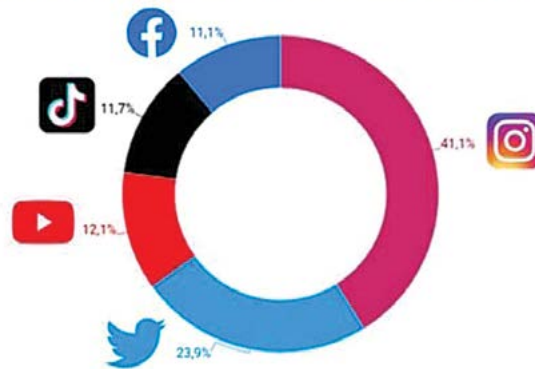


Figure 7: Graph showing the distribution of hate speech content across social media platforms between March and April 2022. Source: OBERAXE

Rates of Islamophobic content among all hate speech content fluctuated throughout the year. The lowest rates in 2022 were in May-June, amounting to 9% of all hate speech, and the highest in July-August, rising to 20% of the total.

A report on teenagehood and youth conducted by the Centro Reina Sofia and FAD Foundation shows that 25% of Spanish youth openly identifies as xenophobic and/or racist.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the poll results show that Africans, whether from

57. “El bulo sobre el burka que envenenó un acto vecinal en Barcelona”, El País, 20 September, 2022.

58. “Protocolo para combatir el discurso de odio en línea”, Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE)-Secretary of State for Migration, https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/ficheros/ejes/discursoodio/Boletin_enero-febrero_2022.pdf (Access Date: 20 October 2022).

59. A. Andújar; N. Sánchez; S. Pradillo & F. Sabin, *Jóvenes y racismo. Estudio sobre las percepciones y actitudes racistas y xenófobas entre la población joven de España*, (Madrid: Centro Reina Sofia sobre Adolescencia y Juventud-Fundación Fad Juventud, 2022).

Sub-Saharan Africa (48.8%) or Morocco (47.3%), are seen as having the most difficulties in integrating in Spanish society, followed closely by Roma (32.4%) and Muslims (32.3%).



Figure 8: Graph showing the distribution of hate speech content by target, between March and April 2022. Immigrants, North Africans, and Muslims constitute the main targets, followed by those with North African ethnic backgrounds and young migrants. **Source:** OBERAXE

Tabla 1. Opinión sobre la ocupación de diferentes posiciones sociales por personas de diferentes colectivos. (Datos en %).

	Vecino		Tu profesor/a o jefe/a		Policía		Alcalde/sa	
	No me parecería bien	Si me parecería bien	No me parecería bien	Si me parecería bien	No me parecería bien	Si me parecería bien	No me parecería bien	Si me parecería bien
Europa occidental o América del Norte (Francia, Alemania, EEUU...)	5,7	94,3	9,5	90,5	12,8	87,2	19,3	80,8
Europa del Este (Rumania, Polonia...)	12,8	87,3	15,7	84,3	19,0	81,0	26,0	74,0
África Subsahariana	14,3	85,7	16,0	84,0	20,4	79,6	26,1	73,9
Marruecos	20,0	80,0	20,9	79,1	22,8	77,3	29,8	70,3
Asia del Sur (India, Pakistán,...)	16,3	83,7	17,5	82,5	22,8	77,3	27,7	72,3
China	14,3	85,7	17,8	82,3	21,3	78,7	27,9	72,1
América Latina	12,6	87,4	14,0	86,0	19,3	80,8	23,7	76,3
Etnia gitana	24,0	76,0	23,6	76,4	25,4	74,6	30,3	69,8
Religión musulmana	18,3	81,7	19,2	80,8	22,7	77,3	28,6	71,4
Rasgos racializados (pelo afro, ojos rasgados,...)	12,0	88,0	14,6	85,4	16,9	83,1	22,8	77,3

Fuente: elaboración propia [Ver figura 46]

Figure 9: Table showing a poll of attitudes towards members of various ethnic and religious backgrounds occupying various social positions: neighbour, boss, police, and mayor. **Source:** Centro Reina Sofía⁶⁰

60. The study illustrates some ways in which the youth has adopted discriminatory attitudes. For example, the poll shows widespread hostility towards the idea of immigrants, Roma, Muslims, and racialised individuals becoming mayors of their city/town. The biggest target of mistrust for the youth are Roma, Moroccan nationals, and those with Moroccan ancestry.

Figura 24. Percepción de los perfiles que se consideran con más dificultades en su integración. (Datos en %).

P26. ¿Podrías decirnos cuáles de los siguientes perfiles consideras que tiene más dificultades a la hora de integrarse en España? [Elige un máximo de 3]

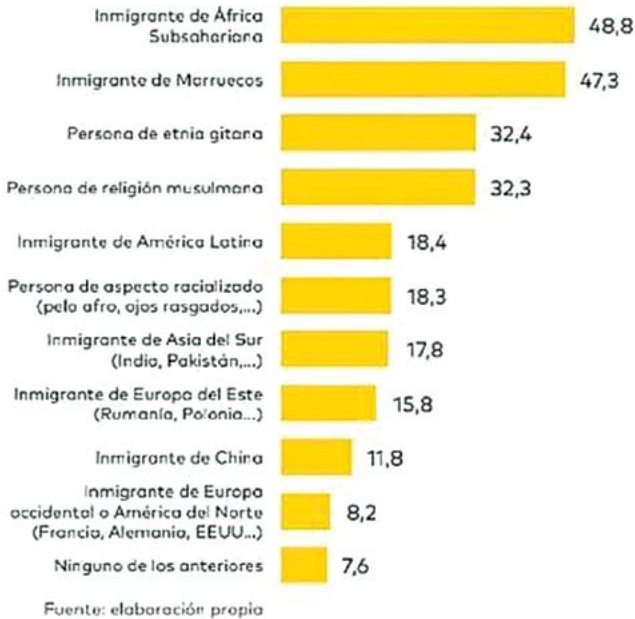


Figure 10: Table showing a list of social groups from “most difficult” to “easiest” to integrate into Spanish society. Africans are at the top of the list and Westerners at the bottom. **Source:** Centro Reina Sofia⁶¹

At the end of the year, during the days before and after the soccer match between Spain and Morocco in the World Cup 2022, many hoaxes and misinformation about Moroccan fans were found and reported by Maldita, such as false robberies, streets set on fire by the celebration, or supposed jumping over the Melilla border fence, which separates Spain and Morocco⁶². Maldita is a media channel dedicated to fact-checking, especially around social media and disinformation regarding migration and Moroccan nationals in Spain..⁶³

To the above, we should add the dissemination of thousands of tweets and posts on social media attacking Islam, in general, and Moroccans, in particular. Users made reference to battles such as Covadonga, the *Reconquista*, or the so-called Kalergi Plan⁶⁴.

61. A. Andújar.; N. Sánchez; S. Pradillo & F. Sabin, *Jóvenes y racismo. Estudio sobre las percepciones y actitudes racistas y xenófobas entre la población joven de España*, (Madrid: Centro Reina Sofia sobre Adolescencia y Juventud-Fundación Fad Juventud, 2022).

62. “10 bulos y desinformaciones sobre el partido entre la selección de Marruecos y la de España del Mundial de Catar”, Maldita, 6 December, 2022.

63. “10 bulos y desinformaciones sobre el partido entre la selección de Marruecos y la de España del Mundial de Catar”, Maldita, 6 December, 2022.

64. The Kalergi plan is a conspirational belief that there is an international plot orchestrated by political and economic elites to import millions of workers from Asia and Africa and mix them with the “European races”.

Users also frequently added the phrase “*Leña al moro*” (Sticks to the Moor) in their messages.

Among these posts, it should be noted how different militant groups took to the streets to, according to them, “prevent acts of vandalism by Moroccan fans and protect the streets”.

FORO MDM
@elforomdm

● #informacionMDM ● ULTRAS SUR Y FRENTE ATLETICO y grupos similares UNIRAN FUERZAS PARA IMPEDIR ACTOS VANDALICOS DE LOS AFICIONADOS DE MARRUECOS Y PROTEGER LAS CALLES por ello convocan a los aficionados de España para salir a las calles a defender Madrid.
Martes 16:00h



Figure 11: Screenshot of the extremist group Foro MDM’s Twitter account calling Madrilians to the street “to prevent acts of vandalism by Moroccan fans and protect the streets”⁶⁵

Nacho TM @shadow_tvvv · 3h

Hoy puede significar la primera derrota de esos que quieren imponernos el Plan Kalergi. Hoy puede significar la primera victoria de la Reconquista. Hoy somos hijos de los guerreros de la batalla de Covadonga. Hoy todos somos Don Pelayo.

LEÑA AL MORO



Figure 12: Screenshot of the extremist Nacho TM’s Twitter account, referencing the conspiracy theory “Kalergi Plan” and reminiscing over the medieval battle of Covadonga during the Reconquista.⁶⁶

65. Foro MDM, Twitter, 4 December, 2022, <https://twitter.com/elforomdm/status/1599495665822093313> (Access Date: 23 December 2022).

66. Nacho TM, Twitter, 6 December, 2022, https://twitter.com/shadow_tvvv/status/1600084323213910017 (Access Date: 23 December 2022).

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

There are several media channels that have strong links to the extreme right political sphere and willingly engage in Islamophobic reporting, seeking to foment fear and distrust, and mainstreaming xenophobic arguments around the *Reconquista*, merging narratives about the Spanish Christian identity and a renewed Arab invasion which threatens said identity, thus making a new wave of *Reconquista* necessary. These channels often voice fake news and use videos or photographs from other countries to portray instances of “Islamisation” or “Islamist (illiberal) behaviour”.

Among these outlets the most prominent are *La Razón*, *Caso Aislado*, and *Mediterráneo Digital*. But we can add other less overtly Islamophobic or less important in terms of reach, such as *Libertad Digital*, *Diario Patriota*, *Radio Decisión*, *EsRadio*, *Aquí la Voz de Europa*, *Toro Tv*, *Alerta Digital*, *Estado de Alarma*, *Euskalnews*, *Periodista Digital*, and *OKDiario*.

Among the main public figures who promote these discourses we find known faces, like the journalists Javier Esparza, Isabel San Sebastián, Javier Negre, Federico Jiménez Losantos, Noelia de Trastámara, Yolanda Couceiro, and Javier García Isac. We must add other columnists, like Herman Tertsch, and the co-founder of *Vox*, Cristina Seguí, writing for the *Vox* affiliated newspaper, *Estado de Alarma*.

Another relevant Islamophobic actor of 2022 is Jordi Garriga, who intervenes in several extreme right outlets, like *Mediterráneo Digital* and *La Emboscadura*, as well as being an insidious frequenter of round tables and social initiatives of the extreme right.



Figure 13: Screenshots of Jordi Garriga’s Twitter account⁶⁷. The tweet reads, “Progressiveness [meaning “wokeness”] is what makes threats possible. Islam is behaving naturally in the face of a decadent society that refuses to exist for itself, thanks to progressiveness. Therefore, progressiveness is the threat and there is no such alliance [between Islam and progressive sectors of society].”

67. Jordi Garriga, Twitter, 24 August, 2022, <https://twitter.com/Jordigave/status/1562218163089162240> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).

Besides journalists and politicians, there are also active ideologues from the extreme right in Spain, who contribute to the “intellectual” efforts of the movement. One such person is Juan Antonio Llopart, current editor-in-chief of Ediciones Fides, a publishing house which also owns the extreme right magazine *Revista La Emboscadura*. This publication was investigated and reprimanded by Spanish courts in the past, for disseminating hate speech, and promoting genocidal violence and other crimes.⁶⁸

Other new faces in the Spanish anti-Muslim intelligentsia include Rubén Pulido, another journalist currently working for newspaper *La Gaceta*. Pulido has openly shared his anti-Muslim stances: on social media, he shares Islamophobic videos on Twitter,⁶⁹ and he participates as an invited guest on the extreme right, Vox-affiliated media channel Estado de Alarma.



Figure 14: Screenshot of Rubén Pulido’s Islamophobic article in the Vox-affiliated news channel Estado de Alarma⁷⁰. The screenshotted headline reads, “Ruben Pulido. Islamisation threatens our customs; interview with Vito Quiles”. **Source:** Estado de Alarma.

Finally, to conclude this list of anti-Muslim actors in Spain, we must mention two journalists. First, Alfonso Rojo, who was mentioned in last year’s EIR report and who continues his tirade against Islam, declaring it “incompatible with democracy”, and attacking the availability of Islamic religion classes in Spanish schools.⁷¹ Second, the journalist who most often attacks Islam in national newspapers is Pilar Rahola.

68. “Condenan en Barcelona a tres neonazis por la difusión de ideas genocidas”, *Público*, 8 October, 2009.

69. Rubén Pulido, Twitter, 8 May, 2022, <https://twitter.com/rubnpulido/status/1523067495627722753?s=20&ct=Qc-jl49ep-lKwfm4oXWnEQ> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).

70. Rubén Pulido, “La islamización que amenaza nuestras tradiciones; con Vito Quiles”, *Estado de Alarma* (September 6, 2021), retrieved October 17 2022, <https://www.edatv.news/noticias/21688/ruben-pulido-la-islamizacion-que-amenaza-nuestras-tradiciones-con-vito-quiles>.

71. Alfonso Rojo, Twitter, 2 January, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AlfonsoRojoPD/status/1477548360177434624> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).



Figure 15: Screenshot of Alfonso Rojo's Islamophobic tweets in 2022⁷². The first tweet reads, "Alfonso Rojo. Islam is incompatible with democracy" and links to his YouTube video. The second tweet reads, "The Catalanian Government insists on eradicating the Spanish language, whilst paying Islamic education for 337 Muslims" and links to his article in a newspaper.



Figure 16: Screenshot of Pilar Rahola's Islamophobic tweets in 2022⁷³. The tweet reads, "The silence of the progressive [left] is full of meaning. They are quick to demonstrate when the bad guys are Israelis or "Yankees", but remarkably silent when the atrocities are committed by Islam. Then there are no moral values, only the shameful noise of silence"; this is followed by a link to an article on the Iranian protests at the time.

72. Alfonso Rojo, Twitter, 7 February, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AlfonsoRojoPD/status/1490729756639256583> (Access Date: 31 October 2022).

73. Pilar Rahola, Twitter, 3 October, 2022, <https://twitter.com/RaholaOficial/status/1576951742822232065> (Access Date: 3 November 2022).

Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

Anti-Islamophobia actions in 2022 have focused on awareness-raising campaigns. Local, regional, and national entities, as well as governmental agencies, migrant associations, and civil society organisations have contributed to this effort.

La Fundación Cepaim, launched the project #YoDesactivo (I de-activate), meant to combat a range of negative stereotypes (racism, sexism, etc.), among which was Islamophobia.⁷⁴

Two state projects are worth mentioning. First, “Casa Árabe” (dependent on the Dirección General de Asuntos Exteriores, External Relations Office) hosted a project on everyday instances of hate violence, “COCO: Contra el odio cotidiano”. This project was the result of cooperation among the civil society actors Cazalla Intercultural, Jovesólides, and Al Fanar.⁷⁵ Second, the project “MAGIC” will aim to establish a comparative perspective on gendered Islamophobia in journalism in Spain and Belgium. The project is a collaboration between Al Fanar and IEMed, a consortium comprising the Catalan and Spanish governments, Barcelona’s town-hall, and the EU.

There have also been two events specifically targeting the academic community: the “I Congreso contra la Islamofobia en la Comunidad Valenciana” (Conference against Islamophobia in Valencia), organised by Jovesólides;⁷⁶ and the “IV Congreso Nacional ‘Desmontando la Islamofobia’” (Dismantling Islamophobia), in Málaga, organised once again by the Asociación Marroquí⁷⁷

Meanwhile, Lucena Acoge, in Córdoba, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2022. It marked the occasion with several activities, among which a roundtable on *Delitos de odio e islamofobia* (Hate crimes and Islamophobia), where the co-author of this report, Sergio Gracia, participated.⁷⁸ Gracia also attended, the “XXIV Congreso Islámico del Sur”⁷⁹ organised by UCIDAN (Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Andalucía, Union of Islamic Communities of Andalusia) on December 11, 2022. The focus of the event was “Youth and Muslim Family in Andalusia: Chal-

74. Fundación Cepaim, Twitter, 5 July 2022, <https://twitter.com/desactivaoff/status/1544203674632740864> (Access Date: 5 November 2022).

75. Casa Árabe, Twitter, 19 September, 2022, https://twitter.com/Casaarabe/status/1571820223770025984?s=20&ct=kfg8dRQA-Iq7iTM_nLrCfA (Access Date: 8 November 2022).

76. Jovesólides, Twitter, 30 September, 2022, <https://twitter.com/JOVESOLIDES/status/1575828116186214400> (Access Date: 9 November 2022).

77. Asociación Marroquí, Twitter, 7 November, 2022, <https://twitter.com/JOVESOLIDES/status/1575828116186214400> (Access Date: 9 November 2022).

78. Lucena Acoge, Instagram, 18 October, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cj2HpkhopHK/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=> (Access Date: 18 November 2022).

79. Lahsen El Himer, Facebook, 2 December, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=5642971459072658&set=a.542455422457646>

lenges and opportunities”, where Gracia discussed the multi-faceted problem of Islamophobia with young Muslims.



Figure 17: Photo of the “Youth and Muslim family in Andalusia: Challenges and Opportunities” event, organised by Union of Islamic Communities of Andalusia, UCIDAN (Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Andalucía) on December 11, 2022, in Mollida, Malaga (Spain). **Source:** author’s own picture.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Spanish society is diverse both socially and culturally, and this fact should be the foremost consideration when legislating, in order to foster coexistence, tolerance and respect for one another. To fail to do so necessarily implies a dangerous road, which only intensifies cleavages between mainstream Christian society and Muslims, and other religious and ethnic minorities in the country.

In order to prevent instances of discrimination on racial, ethnic, or religious grounds, the Spanish public sphere must develop a more positive, balanced, and inclusive discourse around immigration. The existing prejudice and fear attached to im-

migration via the “different Other” discourse constitutes an important obstacle to this goal. As for the workplace, this fundamental space must reflect the diversity of Spanish society, seeking to re-conciliate and encourage co-existence and tolerance among its different segments. Difference, in any case, should not be punished, and existing legislation should be mobilised and applied to resist discriminatory attitudes on the part of companies and businesspeople, but also in media, advertisement, and, above all, social media platforms.

This work can only be achieved through the cooperation and strategic interaction of different civil society and state actors, as well as research institutions and local community centres. Their efforts must coalesce on raising awareness of this growing problem in the country. These efforts are still a work in progress at the moment, with state institutions having only adopted an openly anti-Islamophobia route plan last year. Relevant actors, from Muslim individuals to unions and associations must also be reminded of the current existence of legal provisions to be applied in the protection of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Spanish society today is suffering from clear signs of social polarisation and political disaffection. In this context, we must strive to create bridges across society, promote civic participation, and ensure commitment to positive social change.

Chronology

- **7.3.2022:** Parents denounce that a school in Málaga does not let their daughters go to class “after putting on the veil”.
- **28.07.2022:** Verbal attacks are carried out against MP Najat Driouech (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), of Moroccan origin, by supporters of the president of the political party Junts per Catalunya (JxCat, Together for Catalonia) Laura Borràs, at the gates of Catalanian Parliament.
- **5.09.2022:** A real estate agency refuses to rent an apartment because “we do not rent this apartment to Moors or Africans”.
- **14.09.2022:** Five students from the Madrid institute IES Rosa Chacel are forced to leave their classroom for wearing the hijab.
- **25.10.2022:** A man with Nazi-style tattoos is arrested for stabbing another young man of Moroccan origin in San Juan de Aznalfarache (Seville).
- **3.11.2022:** Racist and anti-feminist graffiti appears in various institutes in Valdepeñas. Some graffiti read “Moors out”, other bears the representation of the Nazi symbol, and other yet alludes to the feminist collective.
- **8.11.2022:** A man accepts six months in prison for insulting and belittling a neighbour with racist slurs “Go away. This is not the jungle”. The defendant, between January and August 2019, rebuked his neighbour, who lived in

the same building, every time he saw her, telling her ,“Shit Moor, my father is going to kill you”.

- **16.11.2022:** A racist graffiti, “Moors no”, discovered in the centre of Málaga.
- **6.12.2022:** A dead boar is found at the gate of the Gasteiz mosque in the Basque Country. The events took place a few hours after the World Cup match between Spain and Morocco, where Spain lost.

