

Exposure of Muslim congregations and associations to Islamophobia





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The Swedish Institute for Human Rights was established on 1 January 2022 as Sweden's National Human Rights Institute. It is mandated to monitor, investigate, and report on the realisation and respect for human rights in Sweden in accordance with its establishing law and the Paris Principles.

Summary—increasingly difficult situation for Muslims in Sweden

This report concerns the vulnerability of Muslim congregations and associations to Islamophobia, hate and threats in Sweden. It forms part of the basis for the Swedish Institute for Human Rights' submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination ahead of its review of Sweden in 2025.

One of the aims of this report is to highlight the voices of Muslims themselves, to convey their experiences regarding the possibilities of operating as a Muslim congregation or association in Sweden today, and to relay their experiences of Islamophobia in the form of hate, threats and discrimination. The individuals we interviewed do not represent the entire heterogeneous Muslim population in Sweden, but they possess important experiences and insights into the exposure of associations and congregations to racism, hate and threats. The Swedish Institute for Human Rights presents what was conveyed in the interviews without expressing our own assessment of the statements made, unless otherwise stated in the report.

In summary, the interviewees describe a negative development concerning Muslims' access to their human rights, and state that Islamophobia has become increasingly widespread and normalised in Sweden in recent years.

- The interviews reveal a concern that Muslim civil society in Sweden has become impoverished. Several also say that the police and the municipalities, in their contact with associations and congregations, focus on Muslims as a security threat and not as individuals at high risk of being subjected to crime.
- Several interviewees state that gender, skin colour and age play a role in how often and in what way Muslims are subjected to hatred, threats, racism and harassment. Women who wear head coverings, such as the hijab, are mentioned by several interviewees as a group that is particularly at risk of harassment. Muslim children are harassed at school and their freedom of religion at school is restricted.
- Several interviewees provided examples of statements by politicians and policy proposals that have consequences for Muslims in Sweden.
- Several interviewees state that racist harassment and hate crimes occur so frequently that they have almost been normalised by those who are exposed.

These stories of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism at the individual, structural and political levels are important testimonies that point to serious gaps in Muslims' access to their human rights.

1. Introduction

This report deals with the exposure of Muslim associations and congregations to racism, hatred and intimidation in Sweden. The report is part of the basis for the Swedish Institute for Human Rights' reporting to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) ahead of their review of Sweden in 2025.

One aim of the report is to highlight the voices of Muslims themselves, to convey their experiences regarding the possibilities of operating as a Muslim congregation or association in Sweden today, as well as their experiences of racism in the form of hatred, threats and discrimination.

1.1. Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism

Two key concepts in this report are Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, of which Islamophobia is the more established concept. These terms (used interchangeably here) encompass all forms of racism, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. Islamophobia often overlaps with discrimination, hatred and intimidation linked to other factors, such as ethnic and national origin, culture and class background.¹

The purpose of this study is not to determine which expressions and actions should be considered Islamophobic or not. Instead, the focus is on the impact of Islamophobia on people's ability to have their rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

In parallel with this report, we have investigated the exposure of Jewish congregations and associations to antisemitism in Sweden.

One objective of the study is to highlight the experiences of Muslims themselves, on the basis that they are best placed to describe their situation and the challenges they face in everyday life.

1 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Raising awareness of and countering Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim racism, in Europe, paragraph 1.

1.2. Interviews with representatives of Muslim associations and congregations

The Swedish Institute for Human Rights has interviewed representatives of Muslim congregations and associations in Sweden. The interviews are part of this study and focus on:

- the ability of Muslim congregations and associations to carry out their activities
- Muslims' own experiences and perceptions of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia.

Between September and November 2024, we conducted a total of 11 interviews with 17 representatives of Muslim congregations and associations. Among the representatives, there were four women and 13 men. More specifically, we met with eight congregations, two civil society organisations and one youth organisation. Some of those we interviewed are also part of various interfaith councils and networks. We selected the congregations and associations with the support of the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities.

The associations and congregations that chose to meet with us are active in southern Sweden, with the majority operating in the three major cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Some of the congregations also gather members and visitors from neighbouring smaller towns. Some are also so-called umbrella organisations for other local congregations around Sweden. About half of the congregations we met receive state subsidies.

The aim of the selection was to achieve as broad range as possible of congregations and associations in terms of funding, size, geographical location, and theological orientation. To some extent, we succeeded in this. While the individuals we interviewed cannot be said to represent the large and heterogeneous group of Muslims living in Sweden, they offer valuable insights relevant to the purpose of investigating the exposure of associations and congregations to racism, hatred, and threats.

The interviewees represent their associations or congregations but are also individuals with personal experiences of Islamophobia. In their roles as representatives, they possess knowledge not only of their own vulnerability but also of that of other members, and of the Muslim community in Sweden more broadly.

The interviews lasted between one and two hours. Most were conducted on the premises of the congregation or association, while some were held digitally.

Each interview began with an open-ended question about how the interviewees perceive the situation of their congregation or association and its members in Sweden since the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's last review in 2018.

During all interviews, we addressed the following themes:

- experiences of Islamophobic or anti-Muslim racist expressions, including hate crimes
- experiences of cooperation with various actors
- experiences of help and support from authorities and political measures in response to racism, hatred, and threats against the association
- enforceability, i.e. the possibility of obtaining redress when one's rights are violated.

Following an initial thematic analysis of the interview material, we presented the report's key themes to representatives of the Islamic Cooperation Council (Islamiska samarbetsrådet), a collaborative body comprising six Muslim faith communities that are eligible for government funding. The meeting was also attended by officials from the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities, who work to support Muslim congregations.² These discussions were important for ensuring our interpretations were accurate. However, the analysis and conclusions presented in this report are solely our own.

In addition to the interviews, we also reviewed recent reports from other organisations and authorities regarding the situation of Muslims in Sweden. We focused in particular on reports, studies, and articles published since 2018 that address Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. These include, for example, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's report on Islamophobic hate crimes³ and the Equality Ombudsman's report on discrimination based on religion or belief.⁴

2 The Government has decided that the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities will be merged with the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs (MUCF) by 1 January 2026 at the latest. Due to a new law on government grants to faith communities, which means, among other things, that faith communities apply for government grants, the Islamic Cooperation Council will no longer exist as a collaborative body within the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities from 1 January 2025. The Muslim faith communities will continue to organise themselves together in new, independent forms.

3 Brottsförebyggande rådet, Islamofobiska hatbrott Rapport 2021:3, 2021.

4 Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, Redovisning av uppdrag att utveckla kunskap om diskriminering som har samband med religion eller annan trosuppfattning, 1 December 2022.

2. Muslim congregations and associations' experiences of racism

“Several interviewees described the prevailing perception that society does not associate Muslims with human rights and that the rights of Muslims are often seen as irrelevant by the broader public.”

This chapter outlines the opportunities available to congregations and associations to operate, followed by a discussion of experiences of racism, hatred, and threats directed at individuals. It concludes with a review of experiences related to the work of duty bearers⁵ in addressing Islamophobia, as well as reflections on political and public discourse.

All representatives of Muslim associations and congregations interviewed described a negative trend regarding the human rights situation of Muslims in Sweden, as well as a shrinking space for Muslim associations and congregations. According to the interviewees, Islamophobia has intensified in recent years. The most significant shift is perceived to have occurred in the political sphere, with several interviewees highlighting statements by politicians and policy proposals that have direct consequences for Muslims in Sweden. Some link this development to the change of government in 2022 and the Tidö Agreement, while others believe the negative trajectory began much earlier.

One interviewee remarked that many Muslims would likely be surprised to learn that the Swedish Institute for Human Rights reaches out to Muslim congregations to discuss the situation of Muslims and their access to rights. Several interviewees described the prevailing perception that society does not associate Muslims with human rights and that the rights of Muslims are often seen as irrelevant by the broader public.

In his 2021 report, the then-UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief described a global surge in institutional suspicion towards people perceived as Muslims, particularly following the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001. According to the report, states and international bodies have since introduced laws and restrictions that reinforce the perception of Muslims as “the other,” portraying their religion and culture as threats with serious implications for the human rights of Muslims.⁶

⁵ Everyone in Sweden are rights holders. The State is the duty bearer, often working through other public actors such as authorities, municipalities and regional governments. Their duty is to ensure that all rights holders can enjoy their human rights.

⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Ahmed Shaheed, Countering Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred to eliminate discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief. 2021, p. 2.

2.1. Freedom of association and religion for Muslim congregations and associations

A recurring theme in the interviews is that it has become increasingly difficult for Muslim congregations and associations to operate in Sweden. The difficulties range from practical conditions, such as access to premises, to exposure to hatred and threats. Several of the interviewees say that the protection of freedom of association and freedom of religion is perceived as strong in theory, but that in practice the protection is inadequate for Muslim associations and congregations.

During her visit to Sweden, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief expressed concern about increased hatred and threats against religious communities. The Rapporteur called for continued public support for religious communities and for dialogue and cooperation between authorities and religious communities.⁷

Premises, insurance and financial conditions

Several associations and congregations report difficulties in finding and maintaining premises. One association described a prolonged search, during which landlords explicitly stated they would not rent to a Muslim association. The same association recounted being asked by landlords what their views were on IS.⁸ Another community reported that a housing association dismissed the board that had entered into a rental agreement with them, apparently to enable termination of the lease. Some associations noted that once they finally secured premises, they were reluctant to negotiate rent or other terms out of fear of being seen as difficult. One association stated that the challenges of renting premises were so severe that the only viable solution was to purchase or construct a building on privately owned land. These difficulties both in finding premises and obtaining permission to build are also noted in reports from the Equality Ombudsman, among others.⁹

A related issue concerns the ability to purchase insurance. Interviewees indicated that older, more established congregations and associations, those insured for many years tend to face fewer challenges. For newer associations seeking to obtain insurance, however, it is often more difficult. These difficulties are tied to the fact that Muslim congregations are seen as high-risk due to threats against them.

Newly formed congregations and associations may also struggle to open bank accounts, which is essential for operating as an association. Several interviewees described how they were unable to get an explanation from banks as to why their applications were

⁷ Web Source: Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter, Flera utmaningar för religionsfrihet i Sverige, 27 oktober 2023.

⁸ IS is an abbreviation for the Islamic State

⁹ Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, Redovisning av uppdrag att utveckla kunskap om diskriminering som har samband med religion eller annan trosuppfattning, pp. 39–40.

rejected. One congregation reported that employees experienced problems in their private banking because they listed the congregation as their employer. Others spoke of prolonged investigations into their finances by the bank, during which activities such as fundraising for those in need abroad were questioned. The Equality Ombudsman has confirmed this pattern, noting that some banks have explicitly stated they do not wish to have congregations as clients.¹⁰

Access to government funding to support operations is another recurring theme. A key factor is whether an association or congregation is affiliated with the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities. Several interviewees spoke positively about the agency and the opportunities that affiliation provides such as eligibility for government grants or the ability to work as an imam in hospitals and prisons. At the same time, some unaffiliated associations reported feeling excluded from important arenas. While some groups choose not to affiliate due to a belief that religious activities should be funded by members rather than taxpayers, affiliated associations argue that Muslims are taxpayers too and should benefit equally from public funds.

Interviewees widely acknowledged the legitimacy of conditions attached to public funding. However, many expressed concern about the new “democracy conditions” that came into effect on 1 January 2025.¹¹ Several congregations fear that these conditions could restrict religious freedom or lead to state interference in religious practices. This concern is not limited to Muslim communities, it has also been raised by other religious groups.¹²

An impoverished Muslim civil society

Some interviewees report that many Muslim associations and congregations have had to shut down in recent years. They describe how authorities often through external consultancy firms have scrutinised how these associations manage financial resources and comply with democratic standards in a way perceived as disproportionate compared to the scrutiny of other associations. Several associations expressed a sense of resignation. They described instances where repeated audits revealed irregularities that were later corrected as requested by auditors, yet the associations still suffered consequences such as the loss of public funding or partnerships. Interviewees also noted that auditors often lack knowledge of theology, resulting in misunderstandings and flawed assessments. One association highlighted an audit that flagged study circle materials as containing

10 Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, Redovisning av uppdrag att utveckla kunskap om diskriminering som har samband med religion eller annan trosuppfattning, 1 December 2022, p. 34.

11 The government has decided to introduce new democracy conditions for organisations applying for government grants. The new conditions apply to non-profit organisations, faith communities and foundations and are described in Government Bill 2023/24:119.

12 Svenska missionsrådet, Kortfattad analys av proposition 2023/24:119 ”Statens stöd till trossamfund och civilsamhället – enhetliga och rättssäkra villkor”, 25 April 2024.

non-democratic content. According to the association, these materials consisted of religious and historical texts used within an educational framework designed to encourage critical discussion and reflection.

Some congregations and associations reported that the Muslim civil society built up since the 1980s is not only shrinking but dying. One interviewee expressed concern that Muslim civil society may disappear entirely, leaving no organisations to advocate for Muslims' rights vis-à-vis the state. At the same time, others expressed hope in a new wave of activism among young Swedish Muslims, such as through student associations.

Several interviewees described how the spread of conspiracy theories about Muslims and Muslim associations negatively impacts their ability to operate. These associations are, for example, accused of “infiltrating Sweden.” The spread of conspiracy theories is difficult to counter, according to the interviewees, because it does not help to deny the rumours that are spread.

A report on the state of civil society in Sweden confirms that organisations with religious affiliations, particularly Islam, are often subjected to negative labelling and Islamophobia. The report highlights that these organisations are sometimes branded as extremist or associated with so-called Islamism.¹³

Safety and exposure to hate and threats

All interviewees stated that their association or congregation had been subjected to various forms of hatred, threats, and vandalism—typically involving racist messages. Incidents reported include:

- graffiti on association premises and mosques
- smashed windows
- pork dumped at mosques
- threatening and racist letters and emails
- verbal threats
- letters containing powder
- suspected gunfire targeting premises

¹³ Forum – idéburna organisationer med social inriktning, Stämplad som demokratiextremist Negativ etikettering och stigmatisering – Så drabbas civilsamhällets organisationer och ideellt engagemang av negativ etikettering och stigmatisering, 2024, p. 9.

→ Qur'an burnings outside mosques.

Some interviewees also reported receiving threats at their homes or through private social media accounts. They observed a recurring pattern: when events related to Muslims occur, whether in Sweden or internationally, threats and hate incidents against Muslims and Muslim associations in Sweden increase. Several interviewees linked the rise in such incidents over the past year to the war in Gaza, with " Hamas " being scrawled on association buildings, for example.

A recent study on the vulnerability of religious communities, commissioned by the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities, found that just over one in five Muslim congregations reported experiencing graffiti vandalism at least six times in a year. Many representatives noted that nearly all of the graffiti featured anti-Muslim or racist messages.¹⁴

Several interviewees also described being targeted with Islamophobic abuse and threats on social media, especially after their associations had participated in public forums or debates. A report from the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) found that Muslims and individuals of Middle Eastern or North African descent are particularly vulnerable to digital hate and prejudice. The report also noted a sharp increase in Islamophobic content following media coverage of the so-called Easter Riots in April 2022.¹⁵

Associations and congregations use different strategies to deal with threats and vandalism. Many stated that they report such incidents to the police, though this rarely leads to concrete outcomes. Nevertheless, they consider it important to file reports to make the problem visible. Others said they do not report every incident, in order to protect their members. Seeing police officers at a mosque or reading about attacks in the media can create a sense of fear and insecurity among members.

Some congregations and associations reported taking precautionary measures to avoid drawing attention to their premises, such as not displaying signage or including addresses on their websites, to reduce the risk of being targeted. Several representatives said they no longer feel safe appearing in public for fear of being exposed or putting their families at risk. One interviewee remarked that Muslims can never live entirely freely, as some level of precaution is always necessary to protect against hate, threats and violence. As a result, many associations told us they now focus on internal activities, such as programmes for children and youth. Others continue to operate publicly and take part in public discourse despite the risks, though they acknowledge that not all associations have the resources to manage such threats.

14 Linnea Lundgren and Sara Fransson, *Hot och Risker i Trossamfund: en nationell kartläggning av lokala församlingars utsatthet och sårbarhet för brott och andra risker*, Stockholm: Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund, 2025, pp. 49–50.

15 Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut, *En studie i fördom – Om rasistiska stereotyper i digitala miljöer*, 2022, p. 3.

Several associations and congregations also reported having regular contact with the police and the security services. In some cases, this cooperation is formalised; in others, it arises in response to specific incidents. Many expressed a desire to be seen as constructive contributors to public safety. However, several interviewees described this cooperation as unequal. They said their associations provide significant support to law enforcement's security efforts, yet receive little in return. This imbalance is seen as especially disheartening given the serious security threats facing both individual Muslims and their communal spaces.

2.2. Individuals' experiences of racism, intimidation and hatred

“One interviewee stated that everyone simply wants to live a secure and happy life with their family, but that this is increasingly difficult as a Muslim in Sweden.”

The interviews reveal numerous accounts of harassment experienced by Muslims in Sweden. These stories primarily concern the interviewees' own experiences, or those of friends and family members, and range from hateful comments on social media to racist remarks and physical violence in public spaces. According to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, there are few places in Sweden where Muslims can go without the risk of becoming victims of Islamophobic hate crimes. Islamophobia occurs in public spaces, online, in and around the home, in workplaces and in schools.¹⁶ Statistics for 2022 indicate that the most common combination of overlapping hate crime motives involves Islamophobia alongside other xenophobic motives.¹⁷

Several interviewees describe far-reaching consequences of this situation. They recount instances where members of their congregations have either already emigrated from Sweden or are planning to do so. Many individuals with economic, cultural and social resources choose to relocate to other European or non-European countries where the conditions for living a Muslim life are perceived to be better. One interviewee stated that everyone simply wants to live a secure and happy life with their family, but that this is increasingly difficult as a Muslim in Sweden. Another explained that they avoid discussing their experiences or being too critical of Sweden in front of their children, as they want their children to feel that they live in a country where they are accepted and respected.

¹⁶ Web source: Brottsförebyggande rådet, Islamofobiska hatbrott yttrar sig i många olika former, 21 March 2021.

¹⁷ Brottsförebyggande rådet, Polisanmällda hatbrott 2022 En sammanställning av de ärenden som hatbrottsmarkerats av polisen, Rapport 2023:16, 2023, p. 45.

Beyond harassment directed at individuals and associations, interviewees also describe structural Islamophobia as a form of violence. They highlight how political rhetoric and media coverage can have a significant psychological impact, fostering a sense of exclusion and undesirability. Several interviewees mention the insecurity created by knowing that many people vote for parties whose politicians make Islamophobic statements or seek to limit the presence of Islam and Muslims in Swedish society. This gives rise to concerns about whether Muslims will be able to access fundamental rights, such as equal healthcare or education.

The interviews clearly demonstrate that Muslims are subjected to varying degrees of harassment, hatred and intimidation in everyday life. Individuals who display visible signs of their Muslim identity, particularly women who wear head coverings, such as the hijab, are especially vulnerable. Furthermore, those with backgrounds in non-European countries are more frequently the target of hatred and violence.

Few report hate crimes

The interviews reveal that many instances of hate and threats go unreported to the police, due to a widespread perception that most reports are dismissed without further action. Several interviewees recount incidents where they were able to identify the perpetrator or had witnesses, yet the report did not result in any legal consequences. The primary reason for reporting, they suggest, is to ensure that the incident is included in official police statistics on hate crimes. Some associations state that they previously worked more actively to support members in reporting hate crimes but have now scaled back these efforts due to a sense of futility.

A report by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention confirms that Islamophobic hate crimes often go unreported. Those that are reported tend to be incidents perceived as particularly severe, such as death threats or threats directed at children.¹⁸

Gender perspectives on Islamophobia

Several interviewees emphasise that Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. This is corroborated by a report from the Equality Ombudsman, which indicates that women and girls who wear head coverings, such as a hijab, are especially susceptible to harassment.¹⁹

¹⁸ Brottsförebyggande rådet, Islamofobiska hatbrott Rapport 2021:3, 2021, p. 67.

¹⁹ Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, Redovisning av uppdrag att utveckla kunskap om diskriminering som har samband med religion eller annan trosuppfattning, 1 December 2022, p. 41.

Interviewees also describe a form of victimisation in which Muslim women are stereotyped by wider society as being universally oppressed by Muslim men. In some interviews, it is highlighted that discrimination against Muslim women by majority society often goes unrecognised, they are seen only as victims of their religion or culture. Interviewees explain that while the media and political debate often focus on Muslim women and girls being forced to wear head coverings, less attention is paid to those who feel compelled to remove it in order to avoid harassment or improve their chances of employment.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recognises that Muslim men and women are subjected to different stereotypes, both of which have harmful effects. Muslim men are often portrayed as associated with violence, while Muslim women are depicted as passive, oppressed, and lacking agency.²⁰

Children's exposure to Islamophobia at school

Interviewees report that Muslim children face hatred and harassment in schools, from both fellow pupils and school staff. One interviewee, for example, shared how he had been called a terrorist by a classmate. Several others describe discriminatory treatment by teachers, based on their religion and associated stereotypes. Children are also denied the opportunity to pray at school or to observe their religious practices and traditions. Ramadan, in particular, is described as a challenging time for children, as many schools are opposed to pupils fasting. Interviewees cited examples of schools sending letters to parents that could be perceived as stigmatising, and noted that children who wish to fast often encounter difficulties.

This picture is supported by findings from both the Equality Ombudsman and Save the Children. In complaints to the Equality Ombudsman concerning Muslim pupils, there are reports of harassment by both classmates and teachers.²¹ A report by Save the Children shows that Muslim children are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and harassment. Over a quarter (27 per cent) of Muslim children report having experienced discrimination or harassment, compared to 16 per cent of children who identify as non-believers.²²

Some interviewees also reflect on how Muslim children in Sweden have been affected by recent public debates on religious independent schools and the scrutiny or closure of independent confessional schools. Several perceive this public discourse as Islamophobic, portraying independent schools primarily as sites of religious indoctrination, rather

20 Europakommissionen mot rasism och intolerans (ECRI), allmänna policyrekommendation nr 5 (reviderad), om att förebygga och bekämpa antimuslimsk rasism och diskriminering, 8 December 2021, p. 25.

21 Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, Redovisning av uppdrag att utveckla kunskap om diskriminering som har samband med religion eller annan trosuppfattning, 1 December 2022, p. 29.

22 Rädda Barnen, Vuxna – vad gör dom? – Barns röster om rasism i skolan, 2021, p. 15.

than as spaces where Muslim children can affirm their cultural and religious identity. One interviewee shared their own experience of attending an independent school, describing it as a place where she felt free to be herself and express her Muslim identity. The current UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief reports similar observations in her report on Sweden. While she acknowledges the state's responsibility to ensure that independent schools comply with Swedish law, the national curriculum and human rights (including children's right to freedom of religion or belief), she also warns that these measures must not result in discrimination.²³

2.3. Work of duty bearers for religious freedom and against Islamophobia

All interviewees describe that there is good legal protection for freedom of religion and association and against racism in Sweden today. From this perspective, it is possible to live and work as a Muslim. However, several of the interviewees say that politicians' statements create uncertainty about how strong this protection is. Several interviewees believe that there are shortcomings in how this protection is applied in practice, and some also question politicians' intention to preserve the protection. One interviewee summarises by saying that politicians talk about banning mosques in Sweden, but despite these statements, mosques are not yet banned. Several interviewees also point out that it is difficult to operate as a religious congregation in Sweden because secularity is the norm. In addition, the widespread Islamophobia is described as making it even more difficult to be a Muslim congregation.

In her report on Sweden, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion expresses the importance of a concerted political intention to ensure religious freedom for different groups in society and the importance of recognising religious congregations as important actors in countering religious intolerance.²⁴

²³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Nazila Ghanea visit to Sweden, 1 March 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paragraph 98.

²⁴ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Nazila Ghanea visit to Sweden, 1 March 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paragraph 97.

Political decisions and their impact on the human rights of Muslims

“[...] all states are obligated to prevent hate crimes and hate speech directed at religious groups.”

Interviewees stress that the challenges extend beyond public discourse and include actual political initiatives that have been proposed or implemented in recent years. Examples include local politicians advocating for bans on head coverings in public services, reduced opportunities for employees to pray during working hours, and changes in school meals, such as increased inclusion of pork, that limit food options for Muslim pupils. Broader legislative proposals targeting immigrants are also seen as indirectly aimed at Muslims. Many interviewees interpret these developments as discriminatory and targeted, despite appearing neutral.

The issue of Qur'an burnings was raised in every interview. Most participants expressed disappointment and frustration with the Swedish government's handling of these events. They felt that the government should have taken a firmer stance against such acts, viewing them as expressions of anti-Muslim racism and hatred of Islam. Some argued that Qur'an burnings should be banned and noted local-level support for such a measure, based on their dialogues with communities and local politicians. Interviewees found it regrettable that freedom of expression is being invoked as a reason not to take stronger action against Qur'an burnings. They compared Sweden to other European countries that have imposed such bans, despite also protecting freedom of expression.

Several of those we spoke with were particularly critical of instances where police protected individuals burning the Qur'an, especially when these events took place outside mosques or during Muslim religious holidays. They found such actions deeply offensive. In July 2023, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, addressed the issue before the UN Human Rights Council. He stated that freedom of religion is a fundamental human right and that Qur'an burnings are likely expressions of hatred aimed at deepening societal polarisation. Türk stressed that all states are obligated to prevent hate crimes and hate speech directed at religious groups.²⁵

Another recurrent theme in the interviews was the government's response to Israel's actions in Gaza. Interviewees expressed disappointment that the Swedish government and various organisations were not taking a stronger stance. This perceived inaction led

25 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, High Commissioner for Human Rights Tells Urgent Debate of the Human Rights Council that Speech and Inflammatory Acts against Muslims and Others are Offensive, Irresponsible and Wrong, 11 July 2023.

to a broader feeling that the government does not respect the UN and international law in relation to Muslim, which negatively affects Muslims' sense of belonging and safety in Sweden.

When asked about the government's action plan against Islamophobia, most interviewees were supportive of its existence. Several had been involved in the development of the original action plan, adopted in 2022. However, none could point to tangible results stemming from the programme. While the initiative was generally welcomed, many felt that the government's broader policies undermined its credibility in the fight against racism and Islamophobia.

Co-operation with public actors

Associations and congregations reported mixed experiences regarding collaboration with authorities and their anti-racism efforts. All expressed a willingness to cooperate with public institutions and other organisations. Many highlighted the important social role Muslim congregations play in promoting knowledge, building community, and contributing to a healthy local society. Several described positive partnerships at the local level, despite perceptions of scepticism or negative attitudes toward Muslim civil society at the national level. There are examples of municipalities and local organisations inviting Muslim associations and congregations to collaborate both on issues related to Islamophobia and with the aim of promoting good relations and religious freedom locally.

Some congregations said municipalities rely on them to disseminate social information, and that municipal representatives regularly attend events at their invitation. Associations that work with vulnerable populations said local authorities view them as important actors and even refer individuals to them for support.

However, other interviewees expressed disappointment that many collaborations focus solely on security and crime prevention, which reinforces harmful associations between Muslims and criminality. They called for more diverse forms of engagement, including partnerships focused on culture and community development. Several said they struggle to find suitable premises, and that municipalities often appear uninterested in helping.

The Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities has highlighted this lack of mutual engagement in a 2023 report, noting that only about 30 out of 290 municipalities in Sweden have any formalised contact with Muslim communities. Where dialogue does exist, it is often one-sided and initiated on the municipality's terms, usually when the municipality seeks help.²⁶

²⁶ Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund (SST), Uppdrag om att öka kunskapen hos kommuner, regioner och myndigheter om trossamfundens roll i samhället, dnr SST 2023–000284 2024, p. 28.

At the national level, interviewees viewed the Agency for Support to Faith Communities as a competent and knowledgeable partner. Both grant-receiving and non-grant-receiving congregations consider the agency an important stakeholder. However, some congregations outside the grant system feel excluded from its networks and wish for more involvement.

Changing partnerships with municipalities, regions and civil society

Several associations and congregations report encountering reluctance and apprehension from municipalities and authorities when it comes to cooperation. Some interviewees describe a noticeable shift in how municipalities view Muslim congregations and their role in local communities. In the past, these congregations were invited to contribute to official documents and to collaborate on matters affecting Muslims. Now, however, interviewees observe that municipalities are pushing forward work to combat Islamophobia and promote Muslim rights without consulting the congregations themselves. This shift has been described as a general reluctance to engage with Muslim associations.

Several associations feel they are becoming increasingly excluded not only from cooperation with the public sector but also from broader civil society. Some say they are only invited to participate if they collaborate with other religious communities. A number of interviewees expressed the sentiment that “everyone knows that being associated with them as a Muslim association can be seen as problematic”.

Rather than working with Muslim congregations, municipalities often turn to academics or individuals who represent a more secular interpretation of Islam. Many congregations and associations believe that intensified scrutiny of Muslim civil society is a key reason behind this reluctance. According to interviewees, this scrutiny fosters a perception that engaging with Muslim associations poses a reputational or administrative risk for civil servants and elected officials.

One association mentioned being contacted by individual officials who expressed personal support for their work and the situation of the organisation yet felt unable to do so publicly. Another association said they understand why authorities avoid cooperation it is seen as an excessive bureaucratic burden in the current climate.

2.4. Concerns about Islamophobia in public and political discourse

“One even remarked that simply listening to the radio could be enough to ‘make you a racist’ due to the persistent negative images of Muslims being spread.”

The interviewees describe Islamophobia as a long-standing issue in Swedish society, though they believe it has recently taken on new forms. Several expressed that previously, authorities and political leaders were seen to take action against racist and Islamophobic remarks by individuals, politicians, or racist or Nazi organisations. Today, however, many interviewees feel that Islamophobia has become mainstreamed, with views once considered unacceptable now forming part of established political discourse.²⁷

The most significant shift described in the interviews is that members of government and parliament can now make statements perceived as Islamophobic without facing any consequences. As one interviewee noted, when politicians speak out against Islamophobia, they are often met with criticism, whereas Islamophobic remarks rarely provoke backlash. Several interviewees warned that this change in political discourse may be perceived as legitimising the threats, hate, and violence faced by Muslims.

Several interviewees referred specifically to statements made by politicians in the autumn of 2024, during the period when the interviews were conducted. Examples included the Deputy Prime Minister’s claim that Islam needs to adapt to Swedish values²⁸; the Minister for Employment and Integration’s remarks when the Swedish Council for Adult Education withdrew funding for the Ibn Rushd study association, describing the association as misogynistic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic²⁹; a statement by the then Minister for Gender Equality, suggesting that young girls wearing head coverings, such as the hijab, could be grounds for reporting concerns to social services³⁰ and a social media post by the then chair of the Committee on Justice, which was investigated but ultimately a prosecutor ruled that the post fell within the rights of members of parliament to criticize migration to Sweden.³¹

27 Political discourse is concerned with the ways in which politics and societal issues are discussed, conveyed and interpreted through language and communication. It includes both the statements made by political actors and the ways in which these statements create and shape public understandings of politics, power and social issues.

28 Web source: SVT Nyheter, Busch: Islam behöver anpassa sig till svenska värderingar, 29 May 2024.

29 Web source: Aftonbladet, Folkbildningsrådet drar in finansieringen för Ibn Rushd Studieförbund, 5 September 2024.

30 Web source: Sveriges radio, Paulina Brandberg (L): Slöja på riktigt små barn borde vara skäl för orosanmälan, 7 September 2024.

31 Web source: SVT nyheter, Förundersökningen mot Richard Jomshof (SD) läggs ner, 25 September 2024.

Several interviewees also criticised the Prime Minister's comment that antisemitism holds a "special status." This was in response to a question comparing anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim propaganda.³² Many felt this pitted two vulnerable communities against each other. While none of the interviewees called for special treatment of Muslims, they stressed the importance of equal recognition and response to all forms of racism. Comments of this nature, they argued, fuel societal polarisation and benefit no one, neither the group that is elevated, nor the group whose experiences are dismissed.

The impact of political rhetoric on Muslims in Sweden has also been highlighted in a study commissioned by the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities, which found that negative statements reinforce feelings of vulnerability and shape societal attitudes.³³

Many interviewees also raised the issue of denial or misrecognition of Islamophobia. Many perceive that knowledge of Islamophobia is limited in Swedish society and that what Muslims experience is often mislabelled as mere criticism of religion, extremism, or terrorism. One interviewee problematised the use of the term Islamist instead of Muslim when ideas or images are presented, arguing that it is often wrongly used to replace extremist or terrorist, thereby incorrectly associating Islam with violence.

One respondent shared that even within their own congregation, raising the issue of Islamophobia has been difficult, as many members have become accustomed to such treatment and see it as normal. However, they also recognized that cooperation with other faith groups, such as the local Jewish congregation, long active in anti-Semitism awareness-raising, had helped to increase their understanding of racism.

In most interviews, experiences emerge that the media fuels Islamophobia in society. The interviewees felt that the media frequently portray Muslims in a negative or suspicious light, often relying on stereotypes and linking Muslims with violence. Interviewees also felt that Swedish media lack sufficient knowledge about Islam and religious freedom. Several said that the constant stream of negative news stories affects them psychologically. One even remarked that simply listening to the radio could be enough to "make you a racist" due to the persistent negative images of Muslims being spread.

³² Web source: Dagens Nyheter. Kristerssons besked om kärnkraften: Kommer börja byggas före nästa val. 26 September 2024.

³³ Linnea Lundgren och Sara Fransson, *Hot och Risker i Trossamfund*, 2025, p. 72.

3. Conclusions

The situation of Muslims and Muslim associations and congregations in Sweden is rarely described from a human rights perspective. Based on the testimonies that emerged in our interview survey and previous studies by other authorities, we can conclude that there are shortcomings in the state's protection of the human rights of Muslims in Sweden today. Several human rights are highlighted in the interviews including freedom of association, the right to redress in the event of hate crime, freedom of religion and the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of race.

Below we present the main conclusions we have drawn from the interviews.

3.1. The right to freedom of association and freedom of religion is under threat

This report reveals a context in which it is increasingly difficult for Muslim associations and congregations to operate. The Institute for Human Rights therefore finds that the rights to freedom of religion and association are under threat. Our assessment is that the Swedish state must take stronger and more concrete steps to ensure that Muslims are able to exercise these rights in practice.

Freedom of association and freedom of religion are fundamental human rights, protected by the Swedish Constitution as well as several international conventions to which Sweden is a party. These freedoms apply not only to individuals but also to their ability to associate with others in order to express their religious beliefs, cultural identity, or convictions. The right to freedom of religion includes the right to practise one's faith and to maintain places of worship, such as mosques.

Several interviewees describe a situation in which Muslims' right to freedom of religion and association is protected in theory but not realised in practice. The challenges they describe, ranging from difficulties in securing premises and grants to being subjected to threats and hatred, contribute to what many see as not only shrinking, but completely impoverished Muslim civil society.

All interviewees report that their association or congregation has been subjected to some form of hatred, threat, or vandalism. To minimise the risk of violence or harassment, many describe employing various strategies, both as individuals and associations, to avoid attracting attention.

The overall consequence is that Muslims' ability to exercise their rights to freedom of religion and association is severely limited. It is therefore vital that measures to strengthen the human rights of Muslims in Sweden go beyond enhanced security and include genuine opportunities to live openly as Muslims.

During her visit to Sweden, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or beliefs expressed concern about increasing hatred and threats directed at religious communities. She called for continued public support for these communities, as well as dialogue and cooperation between them and public authorities.³⁴

In line with the Rapporteur's recommendations, we also see an urgent need to strengthen dialogue between faith communities and the public sector. We therefore welcome the Government's commissioning of the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities, in cooperation with the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, to develop and disseminate a guide for municipalities. The guide is intended to support dialogue with Muslim faith communities regarding experiences of racism related to being, or being perceived as, Muslim.³⁵

3.2. The State fails to protect Muslims from hate crime

Overall, we find that the state is failing in its responsibility to effectively protect Muslims from hate crime and to ensure access to redress. To fulfil these obligations, Sweden must do more to ensure that Islamophobic offences are properly investigated and, where applicable, prosecuted. This aligns with recent recommendations from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,³⁶ as well as those from the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of religion or belief, Nazila Ghanea, following her visit to Sweden.³⁷

Victims of Islamophobic hate crimes, including threats, violence and harassment, must have a real opportunity to obtain redress. The police and other law enforcement agencies play a central role here. The state has a duty to uphold public order and protect individuals from violations of their rights.³⁸ Law enforcement agencies are vital in protecting human rights for everyone in society, including the rights to life and bodily integrity.³⁹ The state also has a specific obligation to criminalise incitement to violence or acts of violence against specific ethnic groups.⁴⁰

All interviewees expressed a sense of hopelessness regarding the reporting of hate crimes. Confidence in the police's willingness to take reports seriously is low, and confidence that such reports will result in redress is even lower. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

34 Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Nazila Ghanea visit to Sweden, 1 March 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/47/, para 98 (n).

35 Regeringskansliet, Arbetet mot antimuslimsk rasism Utdrag ur regeringens handlingsplan mot rasism och hatbrott, p 9.

36 FN:s kommitté för avskaffande av rasdiskriminering, Slutsatser avseende Sveriges kombinerade 22: a och 23: a periodiska rapport, 6 juni 2018, CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23, p. 10.

37 Rapport från specialrapportör för religionsfrihet Nazila Ghanea besök i Sverige, 1 mars 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/47/ Add.2, punkt 96–97.

38 Articles 2 and 8 ECHR.

39 See, inter alia, Article 1 ECHR.

40 Article 4 UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

nation of Racial Discrimination has similarly expressed concern about the gap between the number of hate crimes reported and the number of preliminary investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.⁴¹

Interviewees testify to experiencing racist harassment and hate crimes so frequently that such incidents have, to some extent, become normalised within the group itself. Several also note a tendency for police and municipal officials to view Muslims primarily as a security risk rather than as individuals vulnerable to crime. In interactions with authorities, the needs of the state are often seen as taking precedence over those of the associations or congregations. This undermines trust and may reduce the likelihood that Muslims will report threats or turn to authorities for help.

The Government's action plan against racism states that the Police Authority must maintain ongoing dialogue and cooperation with groups that are subjected to hate crime.⁴² The Swedish Institute for Human Rights supports this initiative. However, we believe that further targeted measures are needed to address the specific experiences of Muslims affected by hate crimes.

3.3. Muslims face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination

Gender, skin colour and age significantly influence how often and in what ways Muslims are subjected to hatred, threats, racism, and harassment in their daily lives. Women who wear head coverings, such as the hijab, are described by several interviewees as being particularly vulnerable to harassment. Others report that Muslim children face harassment and that their religious freedom is restricted in school environments. Interviewees also highlight that skin colour and perceived ethnic background matter. Muslims with non-European backgrounds are reportedly more frequently targets of hate speech and threats.

In preparing this report, it has become evident that there is a lack of research and data on the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on Muslims' ability to access their human rights. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has called on Sweden to collect such data as a basis for analysis and to mitigate the effects of discrimination on particularly vulnerable groups.⁴³

41 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conclusions on Sweden's combined 22nd and 23rd periodic report, 6 June 2018, CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23, p. 10.

42 Web source: Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet m.fl., Ny handlingsplan för ett samhälle fritt från rasism, 13 december 2024.

43 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conclusions on Sweden's combined 22nd and 23rd periodic report, 6 June 2018, CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23.

Based on the testimonies of racism, hate, intimidation and discrimination presented in this report, we see a real risk of violations of the right to non-discrimination as enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other international human rights instruments.⁴⁴ Discrimination impedes equal access to rights. For instance, racist bullying in schools can undermine children's right to education. Non-discrimination in schools is protected under both Swedish and international law.⁴⁵

We also wish to underline the importance of children's right to freedom of religion, as outlined in Article 14 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁴⁶ This includes the right of guardians to raise their children in line with their religious or philosophical beliefs.⁴⁷

3.4. Public and political discourse is perceived as Islamophobic

This report details the interviewees' experiences of increasing Islamophobia in Swedish society in recent years. Many perceive a shift from isolated incidents and statements by individuals or groups, to Islamophobia being embedded in public and political debate and policies. A 2022 study by the Swedish Institute for Human Rights found that thousands of articles in print and online media during the election campaign contained polarising or xenophobic rhetoric.⁴⁸

Racism in political discourse is regularly highlighted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Under Article 4(c) of the UN Convention on Racial Discrimination hate speech must be addressed, even while upholding the principle of freedom of expression. The Committee stresses that this freedom carries responsibilities, particularly for public figures, whose position, context and the wider political, economic and social climate influence how their words are received and interpreted.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Article 2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 2 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Preamble to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁴⁵ Article 2 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Education Act (2010:800), Discrimination Act (2008:567).

⁴⁶ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

⁴⁷ Article 18(4) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(2) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 13(3) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁴⁸ Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter, Årsrapport 2023, p. 90.

⁴⁹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 35 Combating racist hate speech (2013), 26 September 2013, CERD/C/GC/35, p. 15.

Following its latest review, the Committee recommended that Sweden publicly condemn and distance itself from xenophobic remarks made by public officials and politicians.⁵⁰ The Committee also raised concerns about reports that Muslims are portrayed in a stereotypical manner by both politicians and the media.⁵¹

The Swedish Institute for Human Rights shares the Committee's concern. We are particularly alarmed by interviewees' sense that political discourse today legitimises racism against Muslims. This perception not only undermines the human rights of Muslims but also contributes to a social climate in which racist behaviour becomes more acceptable or even justified.

⁵⁰ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conclusions on Sweden's combined 22nd and 23rd periodic report, 6 June 2018, CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23, p. 11.

⁵¹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conclusions on Sweden's combined 22nd and 23rd periodic report, 6 June 2018, CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23, p. 18.

4. Annexes

4.1. Background to the report

At the end of 2023, we started work on two reports focusing on the vulnerability of Muslim and Jewish congregations and associations to hate and intimidation in Sweden.

The background to this initiative was, among other things, a survey we conducted in 2022 showing that freedom from hatred, threats and discrimination are human rights that many people in Sweden feel are under threat. We also found that Muslims and Jews are among the groups that many feel are particularly vulnerable to discrimination.⁵²

In October 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion, Nazila Ghanea, visited Sweden. In her report to the UN Human Rights Council from March 2024, she expressed concern about religious intolerance and discrimination in Sweden, mentioning in particular the situation of Jews and Muslims.⁵³

The mandate of a National Human rights Institute includes providing assistance to UN committees and review bodies in their follow-up of Sweden's commitment under international human rights law. In the autumn of 2025, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination will review Sweden's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In its most recent review, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about the persistence of racist hatred and violence in Sweden, directed against Muslims and Jews, among others. The Committee also expressed concern about attacks on mosques and the lack of affordable insurance against such attacks. Furthermore, the Committee was concerned about reports of stereotyping of Muslims by the media and politicians.⁵⁴

In 2023, we interviewed representatives of Muslim congregations and associations in Sweden. Our findings during the interviews led to a decision to focus this study on:

→ the ability of Muslim congregations and associations to operate

→ Muslims' own experiences of Islamophobia.

We also decided that the results of the survey would be included in our reporting to the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination in 2025.

⁵² Swedish Institute for Human Rights, Knowledge of human rights experiences in Sweden 2022–2023, p. 12.

⁵³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Nazila Ghanea visit to Sweden, 1 March 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paragraphs 96–97.

⁵⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Conclusions on Sweden's combined 22nd and 23rd periodic report, paragraph 18.

4.2. Human Rights Obligations and the State's Duty to Act

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination forms a cornerstone of the international human rights framework. Its core purpose is to clarify and reinforce the responsibility of states to prevent any form of distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference that impairs individuals' access to their rights on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national or ethnic origin.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has repeatedly emphasised that discrimination based on ethnicity or origin is often difficult to distinguish from discrimination on other grounds, such as religion or belief.⁵⁵

The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and includes both the internal freedom to hold any belief or identity, and the external freedom to manifest those beliefs individually or collectively. This may occur through worship, teaching, observance, or practice, and includes the right to form or participate in religious communities and associations.

These rights are simultaneously protected under several overlapping legal instruments including chapter 2, section 1 of the Swedish Instrument of Government, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief includes not only the freedom to hold any faith, belief or identity (including the right to change religion), but also the right to express one's identity or beliefs, both individually and in community with others. This can be done through worship, teaching and practice. It also includes the right to form and participate in religious congregations and associations.

Human rights apply primarily to individuals as rights holders. However, they also include the collective right to associate freely and equally with others without fear of hatred, intimidation or reprisals.

Under international human rights law, the State is the primary duty bearer. This includes the responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of all persons within its jurisdiction. These obligations are not merely aspirational—they require proactive and concrete measures to ensure that all individuals, including members of religious and ethnic minorities, can live free from discrimination and persecution.

⁵⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Comment No 32, CRD/C/GC32, paragraph 7.

A central element of these obligations is the right to redress. When a person's rights have been violated, the State must provide access to effective protection and remedies.⁵⁶ This includes ensuring accountability and support for victims of hate crimes and discrimination, and taking steps to prevent such violations from recurring.

⁵⁶ Article 2 d and 6 in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

