



Maine Elects First Somali American Muslim Mayor

By: Aysha Qamar

These last two years have been historic in terms of political representation. Across the country, Americans elected firsts to local, state, and federal seats. Our country's leadership is slowly making its way to reflecting the diversity of its population. In another first for America, South Portland's newest mayor Deqa Dhalac is not only the first Somali American mayor in the state but in U.S. history, the Associated Press reported.



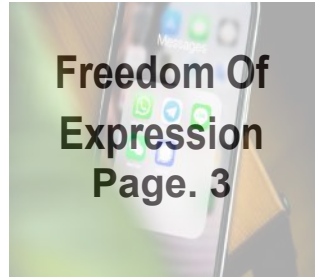
After making history as the city's first Black person and first Muslim to be elected to City Council,

Dhalac makes history as South Portland's first Black, first Muslim, and first Somali mayor. According to CNN, Maine is

the whitest state in the country, with South Portland being 90% white. Dhalac was formal-

ly elected on Monday as mayor of Maine's fourth-largest city by six of her fellow coun-

Cont. on page 14



House Democrats Introduce Bill Condemning Anti-Muslim Rhetoric



By: Rehan Qamar

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Following the recent anti-Muslim remarks made by Rep. Lauren Boebert toward Rep. Ilhan Omar, more than 400 congressional staff members are calling on House leaders to "categorically reject the incendiary rhetoric" in the workplace. At least

50 Muslim aides signed the letter, which is set to be released Wednesday. The letter comes days after Omar shared chilling voicemails and threats she received following Boebert's Islamophobic comments.

Cont. on page 13

The Guardians Of Islam's Holiest Sites Ban The World's Largest Islamic Group



By: Dr. Aslam Abdullah

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs declared the Tablighi Jamaat a gate to terrorism and banned it in the Kingdom. The Muhammad Bin Salman dictatorial regime relied on information offered by CIA, RAW, MI-5,

and the French DGSE to take this unprecedented decision. Earlier, the anti-thesis of Islam, the Saudi monarchy had declared Ikhwan ul Muslimeen a terrorist group.

The Tablighi Jamaat emerged in the 1920s to

Cont. on page 13

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Op Ed: The Oppression Olympics



SARAH KHAN/PAF/GETTY IMAGES

By: Abdul El-Sayed

This piece was first published on The Incision.

The Uyghurs, a Muslim minority community in China's Xinjiang province, are facing genocide. There's well-documented evidence of mass concentration camps, forced labor, sterilization campaigns, forced marriages, and more — all designed to destroy any semblance of ethnic or religious identity. A new analysis of Chinese state papers has demonstrated that the genocide goes all the way up to the very pinnacle of Chinese state leadership. Xi Jinping himself in 2014 ordered, "Those who should be seized should be seized, and those who should be sentenced should be sentenced."

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The Uyghur genocide is a stain on the global conscious. Meanwhile, China is preparing to host its second Olympics in 14 years just as Xi has consolidated power. Last month, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee elevated Xi in a move that could keep him in leadership for long into the future.

These Olympics, like all international sporting events, are about more than just athletics. They're an opportunity

for the Chinese government — namely Xi — to flex their muscle on a global scale. Beyond the medal count, they aim to showcase the quality of their infrastructure, their COVID-19 response, and their global influence as they host. Which is why the Biden administration's decision to issue a diplomatic boycott of the Games over the genocide in Xinjiang is an important move. Yet U.S. efforts to sanction powerful governments over their human rights abuses are so rare as to make this an exception that proves a rule.

It forces us to ask: why here, why now, and why not elsewhere?

High-level officials from countries around the world customarily attend the Olympic Games as a show of international goodwill. The diplomatic boycott would mean that no U.S. official would attend, though U.S. athletes will be allowed to compete under the flag. The boycott also forces American allies to follow suit or be seen as turning a blind eye to the Chinese government's human rights abuses. Indeed, the U.K. and Canada have already announced diplomatic boycotts of their own.

Make no mistake, the

diplomatic boycott of these Olympic Games is an important step to holding the Chinese government accountable for its genocide against the Uyghurs.

But the broader context of the U.S. relationship with China and our country's record on human rights abuses elsewhere paint it in a far less flattering light. First, this diplomatic slap in the face sits far short of the kind of action that really forces the Chinese government to bear the costs of their human rights abuses. Toward that end, the House passed a new bill that would ban imports from Xinjiang unless customs officers could verify that they were not manufactured at the hands of forced laborers. It also forces regular disclosures from companies doing business in the region. The bill now moves to the Senate, where it has broad bipartisan support.

However, comments from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce's spokesman exploit an unfortunate central tension in our selective attention to human rights. Predictably blasting the bill, he called it another example of the U.S. "masquerading unilateralism, protectionism and bullying as concerns for human

rights." The U.S. record on human rights abroad fails to maintain any clear standard and our failure to take on human rights abuses elsewhere casts a long shadow over our country's efforts to take on human rights abuse anywhere. While the suffering of the Uyghurs is profound and deserves a response, it's too easy to cast aspersions on U.S. government activism for the Uyghurs as a convenient ploy to attack an emerging competitor for global power on the world stage than honest efforts to protect an oppressed ethnic minority.

Indeed, the U.S.' decades-long history of coddling human rights abusers in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel are telling. It's well known that Egyptian state security operated by the dictatorial regime in that country routinely uses arbitrary detention, sham trials, sexual assault, and other tools of intimidation to silence criticism. Yet rather than sanction Egypt, we prop up their military to the tune of billions a year. Jamal Khashoggi was murdered and dismembered at a Saudi Consulate in Turkey by a 15-man hit squad on orders directly from the very top of the Saudi

government. The Saudi government runs on a foreign workforce who are routinely denied their basic rights. They have perpetrated war in Yemen that has caused mass famine, killing thousands of children. Instead of holding them accountable, we have subsidized their military. Israel maintains an illegal occupation of Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank that relies on economic blockade, forced removal, and regular state violence.

While I applaud the Biden administration and Congress for their action on the genocide in Xinjiang, I have to ask: why aren't we pursuing similar actions against ostensible allies who are violating human rights, as well? My point here is not that the U.S. shouldn't be doing all it can to hold the Chinese government accountable — indeed it must do more. We should be doing all we can to hold human rights abusers accountable around the world.

Our commitment to our ideals shouldn't end where our foreign policy interests begin. Rather, our foreign policy interests should begin with our ideals.



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Op Ed: Freedom Of Expression

By: Dr. Basheer Ahmed

One of my friend sent a message through "WHATSAPP"

"Raise your voice....."

When you attack black people they call it racism. When you attack country, they call it terrorism. When you attack homosexuality, they call it intolerance. When you attack women, they call it gender discrimination. When you attack Jews, they call it anti-Semitism. But when they attack Holy Prophet #Mohammad (P.B.U.H) they call it freedom of speech.

My humble response is: Let us follow the Quranic guidelines and footsteps of our holy prophet Muhammed (PBUH)

In October 2020, a young Chechen immigrant Abdullah Anzorov beheaded Samuel Paty, a schoolteacher in France who was showing cartoons of prophet Muhammed published in the French magazine Charlie Hebdo which were offensive to Muslims.

Abdullah was shot dead by the police and French president conferred the highest civilian award posthumously on Samuel Paty as a sign that the country stands by his courage and conviction. Abdulla's act was inspired by certain teachings of Islam which command its followers to kill anyone disrespecting the Prophet.

French reaction: There was a shutdown of grand mosque in Paris along with several other mosques all over the country. Many Islamic organizations were closed, and many imams and Muslim leaders were deported. French people believe that the refugees fleeing from North Africa to Europe are bringing their Islamist culture with them causing social stress. France implemented a law which seeks to ban mosques from receiving foreign finances, limit homeschooling and prevent foreign imams from preaching in French mosques. Unfortunately, Muslims are losing their rights as the citizens.

In western secular societies an individual has a right to ridicule the religion or Prophets, but they should show the sensitivity and wisdom knowing that this indecency will be upsetting to hundreds of millions of people in multicultural societies? We do not insult Holocaust victims; we do not insult Rev. Martin Luther King by using "N" word. These acts



are insensitive, hurtful, and may result in violent reaction. How you make a distinction between "Free Speech, mockery and Hate Speech". In multi-cultural societies —cultural sensitivity, ethnic and political awareness is a must for maintaining harmonious relationship in a multi-cultural society.

FREEDOM OF expression; The majority French and minority Muslim cultures have different interpretations of freedom of expression. Muslims believe that humiliating prophet of Islam is a form of oppression whereas for French freedom of expression supersede the sanctity of religious beliefs. The best way to resolve the issue is through the dialogue, not only among intellectuals but the grassroot to understand each other's cultural perspective and religious sensitivity.

Punishing alleged blasphemers violates the Islamic teachings. In fact, people who seek to "protect" God or His Messenger via killing or issuing death threats are themselves causing more insult to Islam and the Prophet.

Of course, any criticism of one's religion hurts one's feelings, but it in no way lowers the value of religion in its adherents' eyes. Most of the prophets sent by God throughout history were ridiculed, mocked and even tortured (36:30). And yet the Quran states that their opponents will be punished only in the Hereafter. All Prophets including Muhammad (pbuh) showed kindness towards people who abused them. One should condemn the blasphemy act but under no circumstances Islam approve murder of an individual committing blasphemy.

Quranic verses do not prescribe punishment for Blasphemy "If you hear God's revelations being mocked and ridiculed, don't be with them unless they delve into another subject. Otherwise you will be as guilty as they are. God will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers together in Hell" (4:140) "But indeed, they uttered blasphemy. If they repent, it will be best for them. But if they turn back (to their evil ways), Allah will punish them" (9:74)

The Prophet's advice for blasphemers. Suhail bin Amr, the poet, blasphemed the Prophet but the Prophet asked his Companions to treat him kindly after he was captured during the Battle of Badr. The Prophet also rejected his companions' advice to execute Abdallah bin Ubayy, the chief hypocrite, because "People will say that Muhammad kills his Companions." If Blasphemy was punishable by death under Sharia, then MOST of the population of city of Makkah would have been put to death when Muslims conquered the city. The citizens of Makkah committed blasphemy against Prophet Muhammed, Islam and Allah (swt). Prophet Muhammed set an example by **showing mercy and forgave all of them. Let us follow the footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhammed (pbuh), a symbol of mercy to mankind.**

Dr Basheer Ahmed is the former professor of psychiatry, South Western Medical school, Dallas, Texas, and president Institute of Medieval and post-medieval Studies, Dallas, Texas.

The Muslim Observer ISSN 1531-1759 (USPS. 018-739) is published weekly for \$100 per year by Muslim Media Network, Inc., 29004 W. 8 Mile Rd., Farmington, MI 48336. Periodicals postage paid at Farmington Hills, MI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Muslim Observer; 29004 W. 8 Mile Rd.; Farmington, MI 48336. Subscriptions: \$75/1 year; \$140/2 years; Advertising: for rates contact: advertising@muslimobserver.com

New Mexico Mosque Set On Fire In The Latest Incident Of Islamophobia In U.S.

By: Aysha Qamar

As hate crimes against people of color continue across the country, members of faith centers and organizations are bearing the brute of it. Faith institutions across the country are facing hate crimes at alarming rates, with an Islamic center in Albuquerque, New Mexico having reported the latest incident.

Multiple fires were set near the prayer hall of the Islamic Center of New Mexico by a woman, according to a surveillance video, local news outlet KOB 4 reported. The fire also spread to the facilities playground.

"So this is her in the corner right here," Ayman Musleh, the facilities director at the Islamic Center of New Mexico told KOB 4. Musleh showed the news outlet a video of what appears to be a woman wearing a black hoodie setting multiple fires Monday morning. In the footage, the woman can be seen lighting some trash on fire in a garbage bin before tipping it over.

While the woman has not yet been identified worshippers believe it may be connected to a woman who showed up at the center last week and was hostile towards them.

"For us to see that anybody could just walk in and do this, we just don't feel safe," Aneela Abad, the center's general secretary, said. "It's a hate crime. It's very targeted towards Muslims. Islam is, the word Islam, means peace. We stand for peace."

While the woman walked away almost immediately after starting the fire, some men who were working across the street ran to the center in attempt to put out the flames.

"Watch this, the fire explodes in his face at this point. You see that? He's literally pulling it out, look at that," Abad said. "That guy is on the phone with 911 so this is the time when the call went through to 911 and look they bring a fire



extinguisher." Abad also noted that these people reminded the worshippers of the good in the world.

While the crime is being investigated by the FBI and local authorities, it has not yet been declared a hate crime. Advocates and local civil rights groups are thus calling for an investigation as such. Hate crimes are defined by the FBI as crimes "motivated by bias toward race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, and gender identity."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Islamic Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, is among those who have called on local and federal investigators to view the incident as a hate crime.

"Given recent hate incidents targeting mosques and prominent American Muslims, New Mexico law enforcement authorities and the FBI should investigate a possible bias motive for this incident," CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper said. "Silence and inaction in the face of growing hate nationwide only provides encouragement to bigots targeting all minority communities."

Worshippers also believe the center was targeted because it is the largest and oldest Islamic center

in the state.

"This was not just a normal crime. This was crime on the religious institute," Tahir Gauba, a mosque goer, said. "She came in with the agenda of burning down this place of worship."

"Now the families, they are actually scared to bring the kids here," The Center's Director of Education Reda Husain Elkomy noted that while the community has always been open to bringing their families, "now the families, they are actually scared to bring the kids here."

Members of the community are now afraid because this is not the first but second time the mosque has been targeted. According to KRQE News 13, someone threw a Molotov cocktail at a wall, scorching a section of the building in 2014.

"We don't partake in violence and we don't condone it, and we speak out against it," the center told KRQE News 13 at the time of that incident.

The latest incident follows a similar incident in Washington state last week, in which a video released by the state's local CAIR chapter found that a car drove up to the Islamic Center of Olympia and tossed an explosive device on the ground in front of the mosque.

CAIR is thus urging houses of worship to take extra security precautions and to use its "Best Practices for Mosque and Community Safety" booklet. The advice in CAIR's security publication is applicable to religious institutions of all faiths. The booklet may be viewed at:

Incidents of Islamophobia are increasing na-

tionwide on both a state and federal level. Just last week, Rep. Ilhan Omar, a Muslim member of Congress, shared threats she received after an Islamophobic attack from a colleague.

Additionally, a new survey exploring the lives of Muslim Americans found that more than two-thirds of U.S. Muslims personally experienced Islamophobia, Daily Kos reported. The survey supports data compiled by the FBI which found that hate crimes in 2020 were reported at a significantly higher rate than those in 2019.

As investigations continue advocates and others are requesting that anyone with information about the Albuquerque contact the FBI or the Albuquerque Police Department.



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Several School Districts Close In Aftermath Of Oxford Shooting

By Yousuf Ali

On Tuesday Nov. 30, there was a school shooting in Oxford, Michigan in which 4 students passed away and 8 others were injured. In fact, this was the deadliest school shooting of the year. Oxford is located in Oakland County and is about 45 minutes North-west of Detroit.

According to The Detroit Free Press, a 15 year old student Ethan Crumley was arrested on suspicion of the shooting and is facing charges including murder and terrorism.

According to the Free Press, the victims of the shooting were "Tate Myre, 16, Hana St. Juliana, 14, Madisyn Baldwin, 17, and Justin Shilling, 17" and "are being remembered as athletes, an honors student and an artist." Additionally, there are possible charges against the suspect's parents for not properly securing



firearms. Since then, there have been many threats of copycat shootings which have led to school closures. In the aftermath of mass shootings, there is a very real possibility of copycat attacks and there are definitely threats that occur. In fact, there have been several threats on social media in direct aftermath of this shooting in the Metro Detroit area with Sheriff Michael Bouchard saying "If

you're making threats, we're going to find you," and "It is ridiculous you're inflaming the fears and passion of parents, teachers, and the community in the midst of a real tragedy." As a result of these threats, many school districts have closed out of an "abundance of caution" including Bloomfield Hills School District, Holly Area Schools, Rochester Community Schools, Troy School

District, Warren Consolidated Schools, Clarkston Community Schools and Lake Orion Community Schools." According to Click-OnDetroit, "School districts across Michigan are reevaluating their emergency preparedness plans in the wake of the deadly shooting on Tuesday at Oxford High School." Right now, the schools undergo the following

training: "As it stands, the district has its staff regularly undergo ALICE (Alert, Lock-down, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) active shooter preparedness training and each school in the district practices drills for this type of scenario." The idea is to make sure people are prepared for the real possibility of such shootings occurring again.

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Right-Wing Media Outlets Wrote False Reports On This Muslim Prosecutor Then Conservatives Threatened Her

by Aysha Qamar

One of the first Muslims to be elected to public office in Virginia has come under attack after right-wing media outlets chose to target her and create false narratives around her work. Elected in 2019, Buta Biberaj unseated a Republican incumbent for Loudoun County's commonwealth attorney position. As gubernatorial elections neared in Virginia, conservative media outlets used a former sexual assault case involving a Loudoun County school to spread disinformation about Biberaj and others.

According to the American Independent Foundation, the false accusations boosted by Republican gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin accused Biberaj of attempting to cover up the sexual assault by silencing the father of the victim by having him arrested and pocketing money from investor George Soros. As a result of these conservative lies, Biberaj has received death threats on her personal cell, home, and office numbers.

Callers have left threatening messages like: "We're coming for you, bitch," "You don't have to watch your back, we're going to come at you from the front," and, "You deserve everything you're going to get."

"Those individuals are highlighting the fact that I'm a woman, I'm of the Muslim faith, I'm ... an immigrant," Biberaj told the American Independent Foundation. "We've had threats and comments and harsh communication from white supremacist groups. So you see that and know that this is intentionally done to rile people up in that realm."

But individual people are not the only ones threatening Biberaj; hate groups like VDARE are campaigning against her as well. VDARE published an article under the headline "White Father Arrested In Loudoun Protesting Daughter's Rape In



School Bathroom By 'Teen' In Skirt. Muslim Immigrant Prosecutor Buta Biberaj Wants To Jail FATHER," on Oct. 11. According to the American Independent Foundation, the following day the organization shared the article in a tweet that called Biberaj a "Soros-backed immigrant Muslim prosecutor who is trying to jail a white father." Six days later, the VDARE account replied to a tweet from the Youngkin campaign about ties between Biberaj and Soros and said that she was "an Albanian Muslim immigrant from Montenegro."

The Southern Poverty Law Center references VDARE as "anti-immigration hate website" that "regularly publishes articles by prominent white nationalists, race scientists and anti-Semites."

Right-wing media outlets including Fox News and the Daily Wire used the Loudoun County sexual assault case as justification of why trans people should not use bathrooms that match their gender identity. They claimed that cisgender males would masquerade as trans females to assault girls in bathrooms and locker rooms and used this case to argue for "bathroom predator" myths.

While the boy charged in the case was reportedly wearing a skirt at the time of the assault, Biberaj said, he did not identify as transgender during the trial, and the assault took place after the girl had invited him to meet her in the bathroom. He then "exceeded the permission and consent of the girl, which is what made it sexual assault," she said.

A judge ruled against the boy on Oct. 26 in his first of two cases of sexual assault in the county.

Right-wing media outlets then claimed that the victim's father was also arrested because Biberaj wanted to silence him even though reports found the father was arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest after a fight broke out at a school board meeting in June.

In an alleged "fact check," the Republican Standard wrote on Oct. 27 that Biberaj "must have understood why Smith, who attended a Loudoun County School Board meeting on June 22 looking for answers, would've gotten upset after the district superintendent said the student suspected in his daughter's assault didn't exist. And yet, she appeared in court personally to push for jail time, a fine

and anger management classes."

Conservative outlets have continued to highlight her immigrant background, referring to her as not American as they make statements saying an immigrant prosecutor arrested an "American who complained about daughter's rape."

As the right-wing media lies spread, threats against Biberaj increased. When she brought them to the Virginia attorney general's office, the Virginia State Police, and the FBI, she was advised to reevaluate the way she lives her life in order to protect her safety.

"The narrative just keeps changing to fit what the goal is ... If you look at everything that's out there, we knew nothing about the May 28 incident until July 9," Biberaj said. "So all those narratives are intentional disinformation."

She added the fact that Republican gubernatorial candidate Youngkin is spreading these lies is even more disheartening. Youngkin has not only called for Biberaj's resignation but demanded a state and federal investigation into the Loudoun County School Board.

"The most frustrating thing is, we look to our

leaders to create healthy communities. When individuals take incidents like this which are harmful, hurtful, as well as traumatic to families, and you're going to take that and let that be your rally cry, just to promote something, then that means your political interests are greater than your people interests," Biberaj said. "And, that to me, is not a sign of good leader[ship], because once this election is done, I don't think Mr. Youngkin or any of the candidates may be in our day-to-day lives here in Loudoun County. But these families are still living here. The hurt that they're causing will still reside here."

"That's not leadership," she added.

According to Loudoun Now, investigations are being conducted in regards to the threats.

"The Virginia State Police is in receipt of the threats and has forwarded them to our Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team, as is done with any email of an alarming/threatening nature that is received by an elected/public official. No arrest or charges have been placed at this time," a statement from the State Police said.

Hundreds Of Demonstrators Across U.S. Protest Facebook's Role In Anti-Muslim Hate Speech

The following is a press release issued by India Genocide Watch

WASHINGTON, DC (Nov. 14, 2021) – Hundreds of people of different faiths, professions and backgrounds gathered in eight major U.S. cities Saturday and Sunday to protest Facebook allowing hate speech to be freely posted in India, resulting in persecution, physical attacks and killings of members of non-Hindu minority religions.

The protests, organized by India Genocide Watch, featured speakers demanding that Facebook's founder-CEO Mark Zuckerberg end his company's complicity in extreme Hindu rightwing incitement to violence, proliferating on Facebook and WhatsApp, as exposed by whistleblower Frances Haugen.

Protest demonstrations, that also included women and children, were held in Atlanta, Chicago, Charlotte, Houston, Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and San Francisco's Menlo Park, where Facebook is headquartered.

Many of the protesters, who can never return to India, have family in India who are targets of state-sanctioned persecution, discrimination and physical violence.

SPEAKERS CONDEMN FACEBOOK INACTION ON HATE SPEECH

"We demand that Facebook designate as dangerous organizations Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, its Nazi-inspired ideological parent Rashtriya Swamasevak Sangh and their armed affiliates, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal," declared Rasheed Ahmed, Executive Director of the Indian American Muslim Council.

At a protest at Menlo Park in California, outside the global headquarters of Meta, the new name for Facebook, Inc., Javid Ali of Bay Muslims for Human Rights, said, "Facebook deliberately and



knowingly refused to block Islamophobic hate enabling fascist violence against India's Muslims. Facebook has blood on its hands." Added Karthic of Ambedkar King Study Circle, "The algorithms used in Facebook are

biased against the religious minorities and the socially oppressed. We

condemn Facebook for failing to fix these proven issues."

As protesters braved the rain to march to Face-

book's office in Seattle chanting "Facebook Hatebook," Kshama

Sawant, a member of the Seattle City Council, said, "Companies such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Amazon

are participants... in the state forces of bigotry, hate, religions and caste

oppressions." Added Hira Singh Bhullar of Khalsa Gurmat Center, a Sikh NGO: "This hate is

Cont. on page 14

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Omicron: Emerging Answers To The Three Big Questions

by Abdul El-Sayed

This piece was first published on The Incision.

Just as much of the country was settling into that tryptophan-induced Thanksgiving slumber, news emerged out of South Africa of a new SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern. The World Health Organization has dubbed it omicron.

To add to the panic, news of the variant tanked the global market at Friday's opening bell. The U.S. announced a partial travel ban from eight Southern African countries following leads from countries across Europe. As scientists rush to understand the new variant, it's been discovered in 15 countries and counting, including right on our doorstep in Ontario, Canada.

Beyond the panic, there are more questions than answers. Let's cut in to the three most important questions to understand their implications.

Is it more transmissible?

The reason why scientists and the WHO are so concerned about omicron, is that it has up to 50 mutations, 30 of them on its spike protein — the piece of the virus that allows it to dock onto our cells. It borrows some of these mutations from the delta variant and some from the beta variant, and nearly half are altogether new. Taken together, they may make the virus more transmissible and more antibody resistant.

The metric to pay attention to regarding transmissibility is what epidemiologists call “enrichment,” or how fast the variant overtakes other strains to make up the majority of new COVID cases. Indeed, within two weeks of first being identified in South Africa, it has overtaken all other variants. That's extremely fast. That said, cases were relatively low in South Africa prior to omicron's emergence, suggesting the variant had relatively little competition. It will face a lot more as it inevitably spreads in European countries facing far more active



delta spread right now. That will teach us more about its enrichment and transmissibility.

Is it more vaccine resistant?

The second question is about vaccine “escape,” or resistance. Though there is circumstantial evidence of cases among double-mRNA-vaccinated people, we are still waiting on studies from vaccine manufacturers. These come in two forms, in vitro studies which will look at the reactivity of antibodies from the blood of vaccinated people to the virus, and in vivo studies that will look at the relative risk of breakthrough infection among vaccinated people relative to unvaccinated people.

I want to be clear about something. Though it has some frightening new mutations, omicron is still SARS-CoV-2. It shares most of the same fingerprint with its original cousins, which means that though the new mutations may render our vaccines less effective, it's extremely unlikely to render them ineffective. So as you hear experts talking about vaccine escape, don't assume that to mean complete escape.

Nevertheless, major manufacturers are already beginning the process of designing boosters that specifically target omicron. Indeed, one of the advantages

of mRNA technology is that redesigning vaccine payloads is relatively simple, involving changing out or adding to the mRNA sequence. Pfizer's spokeswoman said that the company “can adapt the current vaccine within six weeks and ship initial batches within 100 days in the event of an escape variant.” Moderna has suggested a similar timeline.

To the unvaccinated, omicron raises even higher concern. One of the most common excuses that the unvaccinated make is that they already “have antibodies” from a previous infection with COVID. But acquired immunity tends to be more specific to the variant with which an individual was infected and less durable over time. Considering that the appropriate course of vaccination for adults is now three doses, the advantage of vaccine-mediated immunity over acquired immunity in the setting of omicron is now likely far greater.

Is it more severe?

Thankfully, early, though circumstantial, evidence suggests that that's unlikely. South African doctors who first treated omicron patients have suggested that disease severity could even be lower than other variants. Dr. Angelique Coetzee, chair of the South African Medical Associ-

ation said, “we don't see severely ill patients.” That said, that evidence is highly circumstantial. The majority of early omicron patients have been relatively young, and therefore less likely to suffer severe COVID symptoms in the first place. There's a lot more science between here and a rigorous answer regarding the severity of omicron. As omicron infects a broader swath of the population, we'll learn more about its severity.

The emergence of a more transmissible, less severe variant of the virus is in keeping with the evolutionary pressure on viruses in the first place. Permit me some personification here: the virus's “goal,” evolutionarily, isn't to make you sick — it's to spread to as many people as possible. Toward that end, evolving for transmissibility makes obvious sense. But so does evolving against severity. More severe illness both kills hosts and prompts behavior that reduces spread, such as isolation.

The emergence of a new more transmissible, but less severe variant of a pandemic RNA-based virus has some precedent. One hypothesis regarding the end of the 1918 flu pandemic was that a more transmissible, but ultimately less severe, form of the virus

emerged. This variant infected so many people that the majority of the population acquired immunity, reducing the number of vulnerable hosts and ending the pandemic. Yet there remains substantially more to learn about the severity of this variant, and the trajectory it could have on this pandemic overall.

What does it mean?

The consequences of this pandemic, as we've discussed, are not limited to the virus itself, but all the ways the virus has interrupted our lives. For many, last week offered a glimpse of what going back to normal could be. And yet, nearly two years into this, as “over” the pandemic as we may be, the pandemic isn't yet over with us.

Whatever we learn about omicron's capacity for vaccine escape, vaccines will remain the most important tool in our arsenal. That can't just mean a three-dose vaccine for folks at home, but massive access to vaccines abroad. It also means that tools we have yet to use effectively — like mass testing and contact tracing — are particularly critical now.

And then it's the basics. Mask up. Back up. Wash up ... and buckle up, because this ride's not over yet.



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First Female Lieutenant-General Appointed In Pakistan Army



By **Mahvish Akhtar**

2021 was a historic year for Pakistan. The Pakistan army appointed its first female Lieutenant-General. Speaking on occasion, Pakistan Army's Chief of Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa said that the appointment of Lt. Gen Johar as the first female army official to have three stars on her uniform is "indeed, a matter of immense pride for Pakistan Army and the country."

"Army Medical College (AMC) has always answered the call of duty during natural calamities, both inland and abroad. Our doctors and paramedical staff have been the frontline warriors against COVID-19, displaying exemplary commitment and resolve for the safety and well-being of the people of Pakistan," he added.

Gen. Bajwa also laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada at the AMC Centre on this occasion and offered prayers. the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Major

Babar Iftikhar tweeted: "She is the 1st female officer to be promoted to Lieutenant General. The officer has been appointed as 1st female Surgeon General of Pakistan Army,"

Lieutenant General Nigar Johar's story is not that extraordinary except that she is a woman. In 2015, she became the first woman to command in the history of the Pakistan Army. She was given command of a multidisciplinary third-rank care hospital. By 2017 she was only among two other women in Pakistan to reach the rank of major general. In 2020 Johar became the first and only woman in the history of the Pakistan Army to reach the level of Lieutenant-General.[20]

While this is a huge cause for celebration for her and Pakistan, we still have a long way to go before we can actually call this a win. Even though women have been serving in the Pakistani military, since the establishment of Pakistan, in 1947. It was as recent as 2006 that the

first women fighter pilot batch joined the combat aerial mission command of Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The Pakistan Navy prohibits women from serving in their combat branch.

Women can't join the armed forces as ordinary soldiers, pilots, or sailors; these posts are only open to men.

Quratulain Fatima, a woman who has served in the Pakistan military says, "In 2001, I was one of the first women to join the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). But the road was not easy."

"We can't have any scandals around here," our course commander told us. "These young men have never seen women in the academy, and they can be very flirtatious." In our conservative society, he insisted, even "a hint of scandal" will suggest that the experiment failed, closing the door to other women who hoped to serve. "The responsibility of making this work lies on your shoulders."

She remembers that she took that responsibility

very seriously. so did the rest of her batchmate. They knew that they had something to prove and they had to compete with the men. They recall their male counterparts making comments such as, "you won't last a week" we did she says. "But we lasted a year and a half and graduated with those male colleagues to become officers."

According to Fatimah this kind of behavior from male cadets is and discriminations is brushed off is character building. Every time a complaint is filed, they are told if every little thing is going to bother you and you will get offended over it how will you be able to handle the real stress of war and other military challenges. At that time, she says most of us didn't know how to answer that. These challenges do ensure a general segregation among the genders which unfortunately end up in women losing out on a lot of opportunity.

This is not to say that change is not happening, it's just slower than what

we would like. Even Saudi Arabia has gotten on board and is allowing women in the Saudi military as part of the Kingdom's vision 2030. Saudi Arabia's first female recruits graduated from the Armed Forces Women's Cadre Training Centre this week, the first time in the kingdom's history that women will begin service in frontline roles. These roles allow women to advance into senior positions, but do not entail active combat duties.

While the change is towards the positive, changing the outside is usually not enough. There are many challenges ahead for women in military no matter what country or religion they may belong to. Add to it a new thought process and a system that's just been introduced the patriarchy is sure to blame it on the women.

None the less we are proud of women like Nigar Johar for carving a path for herself and showing how its done to young women around these parts.

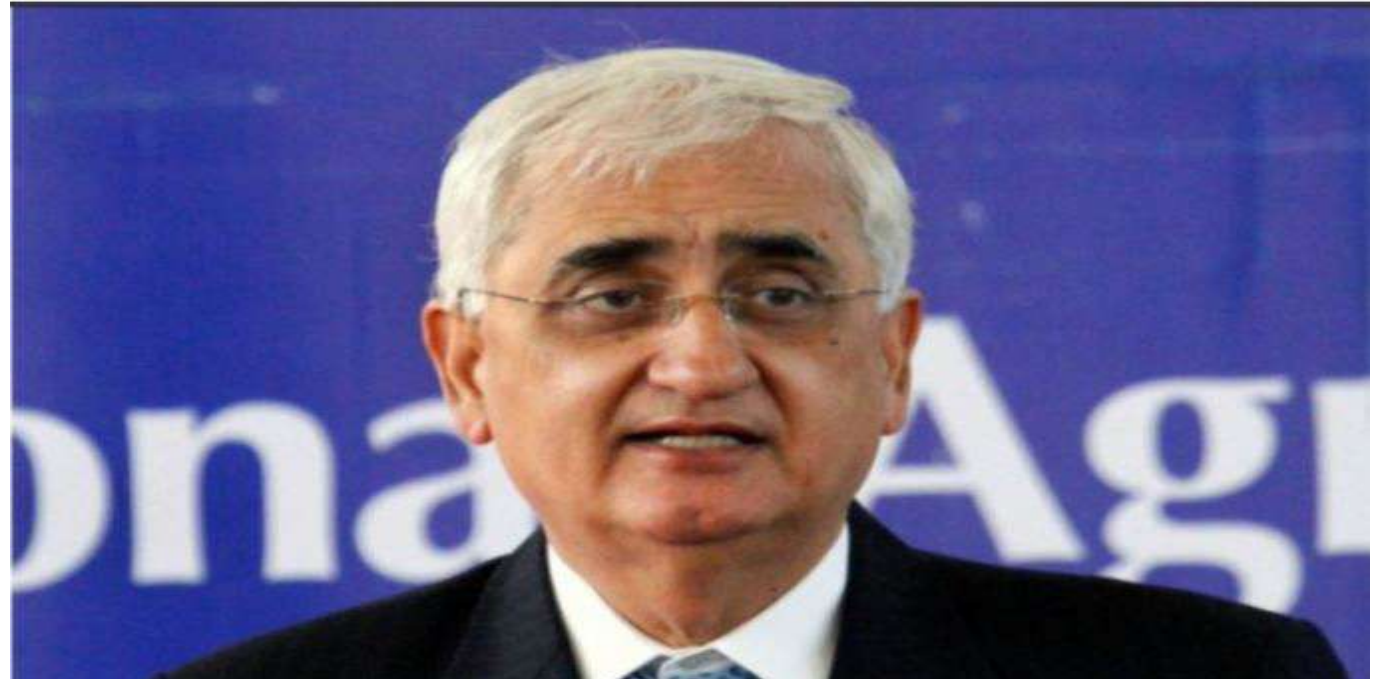
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Hindu Extremists Burn House Of Muslim Ex-Minister

By Yousuf Ali

In India, there have been concerns about increasing Islamophobia motivated by Hindu Nationalism. In particular, according to TRT World, the former foreign minister Salman Khurshid had his house attacked by what were likely Hindu nationalists. The immediate context was Khurshid writing a book entitled 'Sunrise over Auodhya' in which he compared the Hindutva ideology to ISIS. The context is the BJP ruling over India with a Hindu nationalist ideology which has made many Muslims be concerned.

According to the TRT "The Times of India" reported that the group had set fire to an effigy of Khurshid, fired shots and threatened the daughter-in-law of the caretaker with a gun. Salman Khurshid, a Muslim from the main opposition Congress party, published a book last month in which he compared the kind of



Hindu nationalism that has flourished under Modi to extremist groups like Daesh." This is what activists are attributing the attack on minister Khurshid's home to.

The background is a Hindutva ideology which many have compared to fascism in the sense that its goal is to make India as Hindu as possible. This is because many of the founders

and proponents of the Hindutva ideology regularly praised Hitler and Mussolini who were two of the leading fascists in the 20th century.

According to Al Jazeera, there have been other examples of violence against non-Hindus because of Hindu nationalism "Modi's government rejects having a radical "Hindutva" (Hindu supremacist) agenda and

insists that people of all religions have equal rights. Uttarakhand state, where the latest incident took place, appears to be a particular hotspot.

Last month, a mob of about 200 people reportedly attacked a church in the state. The local head of the BJP said the building was used for "suspicious gatherings". Members

of the opposition have responded in defense of the former minister including Shashi Tharoor, "is a statesman who has ... always articulated a moderate, centrist, inclusive vision of the country domestically". "The mounting levels of intolerance in our politics should be denounced by those in power"

IAMC Asks Economic Times To Withdraw Defamatory & False Allegations Against IAMC

Press release from Indian American Muslim Council

WASHINGTON, D.C., (November 22, 2021) – The Indian American Muslim Council, an advocacy group dedicated to safeguarding India's pluralist and tolerant ethos, has asked The Economic Times newspaper to withdraw defamatory and false allegations it has published against the organization.

The allegations in "Tripura violence: Police identifies social media conspiracy posts originating outside India," authored by Bikash Singh and published on the Economic Times website on November 15, 2021, were "patently false... with no basis in fact," IAMC Executive Director Rasheed Ahmed wrote in a letter to the newspaper's editors.

Citing unnamed government sources, the news article alleged that IAMC had "links with the Jel network of Pakistan and

of supporting Taliban and lobbying with foreign organizations against India in connivance with the ISI."

Ahmed wrote: "We categorically state that IAMC is not linked with JEI (Jamaat-e-Islami) in Pakistan, it does not support the Taliban, and it has no connection with the ISI. The article falsely claims IAMC is part of an "anti-India" lobby."

Noting that the Economic Times report "offered no evidence in support of its defamatory claims," Ahmed wrote the newspaper's "malafide conduct violates the essential principles of journalism: fairness, balance and truth" and had "damaged IAMC's reputation and goodwill globally."

Ahmed also criticized the newspaper for failing to "reach out to IAMC before echoing the allegations from unnamed sources." The newspaper's reporter "failed to contact" IAMC, a bona



fide nonprofit organization registered in Washington, D.C., although its phone number and email ID were listed on its website, Ahmed wrote.

As such, Ahmed urged the newspaper to "immediately withdraw the false and fabricated allegations... and issue a public apology to IAMC."

The letter has been sent to The Economic Times Executive Editor Bodhisatva Ganguli and Associate Executive Editor Javed Sayed.

Since its founding in 2002 IAMC had been

"widely recognized in the US Congress, such as from US Senator Ed Markey, Congressman Andy Levin and Congresswoman Marie Newman, the US Government and other stakeholders for its advocacy on human rights, civil and political liberties, and religious freedom in India and the U.S," Ahmed wrote.

Over two decades, no law enforcement agency either in the U.S. or in India had ever investigated or accused IAMC "of any wrongdoing or associating with any foreign government or

its agencies or terror groups," Ahmed wrote.

IAMC had addressed the National Prayer Breakfast as part of a global panel of human rights defenders organized by the U.S. Department of State in February 2020. IAMC works with global organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and The Advocates for Human Rights, among others.

Ahmed cited IAMC's long standing association with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), whose Chair Nadine Maenza and Commissioner Anurima Bhargava have addressed several briefings organized by IAMC.

The Economic Times's baseless attacks against IAMC only serve to diminish the publication's credibility and validate India's 142nd ranking in the World Press Freedom Index.

Ilhan Omar Shares Threats And Hate Received After Lauren Boebert's Anti-Muslim Attack

BY: TMO Staff

In the face of increasing hate and Islamophobia, Democratic U.S. Reps. Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Andre Carson condemned anti-Muslim remarks made by their colleague, Republican Rep. Lauren Boebert, during a Tuesday press conference. According to ABC News, they are the only three Muslims in Congress's House of Representatives.

"We may only be three among hundreds serving in Congress, but we are strong advocates that won't shy away in demanding better for our communities. No one deserves to feel hate or racism solely based on one's faith. It's completely unacceptable," Tlaib said.

During the press conference, Omar shared her experience as a Muslim American alongside the consistent hate she has received from colleagues since being elected.

"So, when a sitting member of Congress calls a colleague a member of the 'jihad squad' and falsifies a story to suggest that I will blow up the Capitol, it is not just attack on me, but on millions of American Muslims across this country,"



Omar said, referring to Boebert.

Last week Boebert made headlines for a viral video that circulated on Twitter in which she claimed she thought Omar was a terrorist. She also referred to the Muslim congresswoman as a member of the "Jihad Squad." While she issued a nonapology on Twitter shortly after, other footage was found in which she spewed the same anti-Muslim rhetoric at a separate event.

"We cannot pretend that this hate speech from leading politicians doesn't have real consequences," Omar said Tuesday. "The truth is that anti-Muslim hate is on the rise both here at home and around the world."

Omar not only condemned the hate but spoke of her own experiences. She shared the "hundreds" of threats she has received following attacks by her Republican colleagues. Omar even held up her phone and played a graphic voicemail in which a person issued a death threat.

Trigger warning: The following transcript and video may contain explicit or violent language and details.

"We see you, Muslim sand n***** bitch," the unidentified man in the voicemail said. "We know what you're up to. You're all about taking over our country. Don't worry, there's plenty that will love the opportunity to take you off the face of this fucking earth."

Come get it, you fucking Muslim piece of shit. You jihadist. We know what you are. You're a fucking traitor. You will not live much longer, bitch, I can almost guarantee you that. We the people are rising up, and you will be tried before a military tribunal, and you will be found guilty."

Omar said she received the call on Monday, hours after Boebert refused to apologize to her for her anti-Muslim remarks. The voicemail was one of many threats she has received.

"Condemning this should not be a partisan issue," Omar added. "This is about our basic humanity and fundamental rights of religious freedom enshrined in our Constitution. Yet, while

some members of the Republican Party have condemned this, to date, the Republican Party leadership has done nothing to hold their members accountable."

Omar and the other Muslim Congress members urged congressional leaders to take action against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

"We are committed to ensuring a real consequence for dangerous statements that fuel bigotry and incite violence — especially when it is coming from one of our own colleagues" said Carson, who is the dean of the Muslim Caucus. "Rep. Boebert's comments are an insult to this institution and to American ideals. We are NOT anyone's scapegoat."

The three were joined on the podium by Rep. Jamaal Bowman, who is not Muslim but stood with them in solidarity.

"I'm worried about the degradation of our values and of our psychology as a nation as our Republican colleagues continue to fan the flames of racial hate and conflict, and where that is leading us in a post-Trump era," Bowman said.

Islamophobic U.S. Congress Members

by Dr. Aslam Abdullah

A white racist congresswoman representing Christianity and The Republican Party, Colorado Rep. Lauren Boebert @, called representative Ilhan Omar a terrorist "black-hearted" and "evil." The Christian party leadership is silent, giving rise to apprehension that anti-Islam and Muslim rhetoric are part of an electoral strategy to mobilize evangelical right-wing followers of Jesus for 2022 midterm polls.

Muslims should hold the Republicans responsible for Islamophobia systematically promoted by right-wing Christians occupying significant Congress and state legislatures positions.

The interfaith communi-



ty should speak up. Additionally, Muslim electoral groups should identify Islamophobic representatives in Congress and other bodies to mobilize public support against them.

Threats to Ilhan Omar

are serious, as they are against a whole religion and a community. Muslims in the last election supported several Republican candidates for Congress. Some 35 percent of Muslim voters for Trump, a known crusader against Ilhan and

an Islamophobic.

Muslim members of the Republican Party should raise Islamophobia in their inner circles and demand condemnation of anyone who indulges in hate politics.

Republicans are not

alone in anti-Islam rhetoric. Liberals and Democrats also do not lag. Of course, the hate mongers have no place in our legislative bodies. But the task of exposing anti-Muslim forces in the US is upon Muslims. There is plenty of time before the next midterm. The anti-Islamophobic campaign with allies from interfaith groups should begin now.

The Press conference that three Muslim members of Congress addressed on November 30, 2021, explains the threats the Muslim community faces in the country. It should move fast to challenge groups putting their lives at risk.

CONTINUED STORY

**Cont. from page 1.
House Democrats**

“As passionate public servants, we each have chosen to pursue a career in public service to work towards a better future for our country,” the aides wrote in an open letter to the chamber’s leadership, NBC News reported. “However, the recent remarks by Rep. Boebert have heightened the climate of Islamophobia on the Hill, creating a feeling of anxiety and fear for many Muslim staff, our families, and communities, and leaving many of us to look to our congressional leaders for support.”

The letter though is not the only thing about which Congressional staff members are expressing their views. On Wednesday, Rep. Ayanna Pressley introduced a resolution condemning Boebert’s Islamophobic rhetoric that would also remove her from her current committee assignments.

First reported by The Washington Post, the Pressley resolution is cosponsored by almost a dozen other House Dems, including Reps. Jamaal Bowman, Cori Bush, Judy Chu, Jesús “Chuy”

García, Gomez, Pramila Jayapal, Barbara Lee, Rashida Tlaib, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

“For a Member of Congress to repeatedly use hateful, anti-Muslim rhetoric and Islamophobic tropes towards a Muslim colleague is dangerous. It has no place in our society and it diminishes the honor of the institution we serve in,” Pressley said in a statement.

“Without meaningful accountability for that Member’s actions, we risk normalizing this behavior and endangering the lives of our Muslim colleagues, Muslim staffers and every Muslim who calls America home. The House must unequivocally condemn this incendiary rhetoric and immediately pass this resolution. How we respond in moments like these will have lasting impacts, and history will remember us for it,” Pressley added.

The call to remove Boebert from her committee assignments is not the first one of its kind. Democrats established the precedent earlier this year by removing Greene from her committee assignments after several videos depicted her

advocating for conspiracy theories and racism.

“Congress cannot forgo accountability when a Member engages in hate speech that dehumanizes not only a colleague, but an entire people,” the co-sponsors said in a statement last week. “We cannot be complicit as members of this body, who swore an oath to protect and defend the constitution of the United States, trample on the fundamental right of religious freedom.”

A press conference was held Wednesday to introduce and discuss the resolution with the public.

“There must be consequences for vicious workplace harassment and abuse that creates an environment so unsafe for colleagues and staff that it invites death threats against them,” Jayapal said. “There must be consequences for elected representatives who traffic in anti-Muslim and racist tropes that make all Muslims across the country less safe.”

While some Republican leaders supported taking action against Boebert, of course others did not agree with keeping their own accountable.

During a GOP conference

meeting Wednesday, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy urged Republicans not to attack each other and to stay united, The Washington Post reported. Other lawmakers echoed that sentiment including Minority Whip Steve Scalise who suggested that Republicans would not take action. He used Boebert’s non-apology tweet as a reason, claiming it was good enough.

“I think when a member apologizes, you ought to respect and appreciate that and call for a higher standard, but it starts with a member themselves acknowledging they said something they shouldn’t and then move on,” Scalise said. “The fact [is] that on the Democrats’ side, they want to only go after Republicans. They don’t even ask their own members to apologize for things that were said, let alone go after their own members.”

Boebert’s non-apology came after videos were released in which she called Omar, a Muslim Congresswoman, “a terrorist” and member of the “Jihad squad,” not once but on at least two separate occasions.

“Well, she doesn’t have a backpack. We should

be fine,” Boebert said in one incident, according to WCCO. “And I said, ‘Oh look, the jihad squad decided to show up for work today.’”

But of course, that’s not all. After an exchange with Omar, instead of apologizing Boebert continued her anti-Muslim rhetoric.

While it is unclear whether House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will take action after the resolution’s introduction, Democrats including Omar are confident she will take some sort of action against Boebert.

“I’ve had a conversation with the speaker, and I’m very confident that she will take decisive action next week,” Omar told CNN. “As you know, when I first got to Congress, I was worried that, you know, I wasn’t going to be allowed to be sworn in because there was a ban on the hijab. She promised me that she’d take care of it. She fulfilled that promise. She made another promise to me that she will take care of this, and I believe her.”

GOP House leadership has declined to take any action against Boebert.

**Cont. from page 1.
The Guardians**

respond to the Shuddhi movement started by Swami Shardhanand to convert non-Hindus to Hinduism under the banner of Araya Samaj. Shuddhi is Sanskrit for purification. Araya Samaj considers Sikhs, Dalits, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians impure.

Gandhi commenting on the movement wrote the following in the May 29, 1922, issue of Young India.

“Swami Shraddhananda has also become a character of disbelief. I know that his speeches are often provocative. Just as most Muslims think that every non-Muslim will one day convert to Islam, Shraddhananda also believes that every Muslim can become part of the Aryan religion. Shraddhananda Ji is fearless. He alone has built a great Brahmacharya Ashram (Gurukul) in the holy Ganges. But

they are in a hurry, and it will move soon. He inherited it from the Aryan society.”

Tablighi Jamat focused on areas where Araya Samaj had forcibly converted many Muslims belonging to Rajputs. Its message was simple. Every Muslim should be well versed in the meaning of the first article of faith, the Kalima, or the assertion that there is no god but one God and Muhammad is his messenger. They should live their life according to the Quran and the practice of the Prophet.

Prayer is the essence of faith, and Muslims should not neglect five daily prayers. In addition to Salat, Muslims should aspire to increase their knowledge to remember God and His bounties. Moreover, Muslims should honor fellow Muslims by showing compassion. Generosity and solidarity. Their intentions should be pure, and they should devote time to relay the above message

to other Muslims.

Over the years, the Tablighi Jamat grew as one of the most disciplined and organized apolitical religious movements without the structure of an organization. Every day millions of its volunteers are active in almost every part of the world, staying in mosques and sharing their passion with other Muslims.

However, the lack of proper organization and the reliance only on volunteers made the Tablighi Jamat a recruiting ground for various intelligence organizations and political groups.

Saudi religious groups in the 1980s worked closely with the Tablighi Jamat and, at the behest of the CIA-controlled leaders, obtained crucial information on East European countries where the Tablighis often visited. Likewise, the ISI of Pakistan and the RAW of India always had their recruits in the Tablighi Jamat to collect information on Mosques

and Muslims in the area where the groups visited. One of the programs of the Tablighis is to see people’s homes to invite them to the mosque and persuade them to spare days and months for missionary work.

Intelligence agencies and other groups, such as white and Hindu supremacists, also had their trained members posing as Tablighis.

Because of its prominent position in the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia was the leading nation to use Muslim organizations to justify its undemocratic and despotic regime in the name of Islam. Perhaps, there is not a single Muslim organization of leader of the prominence that did not receive funding from Saudi sources during the last five decades. Saudi monarchy was a proxy for Washington, London, and Paris.

Under the present de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, India, with the Hindu nationalist, has assumed a

significant position in the Kingdom. The two countries share important decisions. Regular meetings between their intelligence agencies occur in which the members of the Hindu militant organizations, the RSS are present. Over the years, the Saudis have donated vast amounts of money to several Muslim outfits in India. The information the Saudi intelligence shares that information with the government of India.

The ban on the Tablighi Jamat is the outcome of the intelligence network. Saudi authorities fear that anti-monarchy elements have become part of the Tablighi movement. Therefore, during their visits to various Saudi cities, they recruit dissidents to organize a movement for change in the future. After ruling the country ruthlessly for more than eight decades, the ban is part of the royal family’s insecurities.

Cont. from page 1. Muslim Mayor

color, whom all identify as white. She served as District 5 city councilor for three years prior to her election. A former refugee, Dhalac came to America over 30 years ago, when Somalia was on the verge of civil war.

The first person she shared the news of her confirmation with was her mother, who reminded her of a prayer she recited to her at the start of high school; the prayer told Dhalac to always be a leader in a community of people of all backgrounds and to use her father's light to guide her.

"It was so beautiful," Dhalac said before Monday's ceremony. "It brought tears to my eyes."

According to the Portland Press Herald, Dhalac grew up in a middle-class family with two brothers. Her father was a former petroleum engineer who lost his job because he was a vocal supporter of Somalia's fight for independence from colonial rule in the 1960s.

"My father really introduced us to the world," Dhalac told the Portland Press Herald, "in read-



ing books and telling us stories about the world and making sure that we were not stuck only in what's happening in our country, in Somalia, but also telling us there's a broader world out there. We were really groomed to understand how politics works, how our country was oppressed."

Dhalac's father died in 1989. As a strong advocate for education, he urged family members to make sure his daughter received the education she deserved. She left Somalia before her life was put in danger.

"Girls are seen as the honor of the family in Somalia," Dhalac said. "My father was a strong believer in girls' education and empowerment. I think he was a feminist in his own way."

Dhalac's story is one of resilience; leaving Somalia was not easy, and as a young adult she continued to travel in an

attempt to find a place to settle, until she finally arrived in America. Her journey in the U.S. began in Georgia, but after encouragement from distant family members, later brought her to Maine.

"I loved it," Dhalac said. "It was beautiful. I knew Maine was the place for me." Dhalac and her children moved to Maine in 2005, where she began a new life working various jobs that impacted and gave back to the local community. Eventually, this led to her becoming a city councilor.

Dhalac was elected to the City Council in 2018, in a special election that was held to fill the last two years of a three-year term of a councilor who resigned suddenly. She was then re-elected in 2020 to a three-year term that runs through 2023.

"I am so proud and humbled that the voters of South Portland have

placed their trust in me. It's a privilege and a responsibility, and I'm ready to go to work for them," Dhalac said when she was first elected.

She added that being a woman of color in politics also brought a sense of satisfaction.

"I'm glad that a little girl who looks like me will see me and think, 'I can do that, too,'" she said.

As mayor, Dhalac takes on the additional duties of running council meetings and heading citywide initiatives for the same \$3,000 annual stipend that each councilor receives. Dhalac currently works for the Maine Department of Education on family engagement and cultural responsiveness.

In her inaugural address Monday, Dhalac promised to keep an open mind as mayor "and listen with empathy, compassion, grace, and understanding, so we can serve South Portland together." As mayor, Dhalac said she plans to focus on diversity, environmental protection, and affordable housing.

The Council of Islamic American Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organiza-

tion, praised Dhalac's election "as a sign of the increasing civic involvement of the American Muslim community." Spokesperson Ibrahim Hooper said: "We hope Mayor Dhalac will help inspire a new generation of American Muslims as they take an increasing role in building a better society."

Dhalac hopes her election as mayor will inspire others to follow in her footsteps despite the background they come from.

"I'm [...] really proud of the fact that I'm going to be opening a lot of paths for other folks who look like me, especially our young community members, to say, 'If this woman can do this, actually I can do that,'" Dhalac told the City Council last month after her nomination.

"And also not only for immigrant, first-generation, or Black people, but also young, white individuals who may have been afraid or don't want to be a part of the civic duties that we all have. [...] I say, 'Yes, if I can do this, yes, you can do it. We really, really need you, each and every one of you in this beautiful city of ours, to step up.'"

Cont. from page 7. Facebook's Role

coming from politicians promoting hate. Shame on Facebook." Said Javed Sikander, a Muslim activist: "The hatred is destroying the fabric of Indian society."

At Charlotte, North Carolina, protester Elyas Mohammed said, "Facebook provided a platform for the right-wing hate-mongering elements to flourish. Had it taken stringent action on fake accounts things could have been different."

Shakeib Mashhood, a protester at Houston, Texas, said: "Facebook is becoming a tool to spread hate in India, which is very outrageous. More concerning is that Facebook knew that this was happening but it did not take any action. They did not block it."

At Chicago, Syed Shoaib Qadri said, "We want accountability from Facebook for its criminal

behavior."

Added Musaddique Thange, a protester at San Diego, California, "Facebook is enabling inflammatory and violent rhetoric against Muslims in India and around the world. Facebook should designate RSS, Bajrang Dal and all its affiliates as dangerous and terrorist organizations."

Zameer Khan, organizer of the Atlanta protest, declared: "Public protests and demonstrations are needed to begin to galvanize the American people and politicians especially into taking action against Facebook for poor management of its social media platform."

PROTESTERS' SLOGANS SEND POWERFUL MESSAGES TO POWER

Some of the posters and placards held up by marchers said:

FACEBOOK ENABLES RACISM

FACEBOOK ENABLES FASCISM

FACEBOOK UNDERMINES DEMOCRACIES

FACEBOOK PROMOTES ISLAMOPHOBIA

FACEBOOK HATE SPEECH RULES HELP BJP IN INDIA

FACEBOOK FAILED ITS USERS

INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES USING FACEBOOK TO SPREAD HATE SPEECH

As Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen and Facebook's own internal documents have revealed, the vast RSS-BJP network is running fake pages and deliberately spreading misinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence, abetted by Facebook's algorithms.

India is Facebook's biggest market, with at least 340 million Facebook accounts and 400 million WhatsApp users. The

social media giant has increasingly prioritized business interests in India, failing to act against the tsunami of hate and violence enabled by its platforms.

INDIA OF CONCERN ON GENOCIDE WATCH

Because of its ongoing state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities, Genocide Watch has issued Genocide Emergency: India document placing India at stage No. 8 on the 10-point scale leading to genocide, adding that although the government is not yet at the mass extermination phase, No. 9, it is already at No. 10, official denial.

"We think that now in Kashmir and Assam, the stage is at persecution, and that's the stage just before actual genocide," said Dr. Gregory H. Stanton, Founding President and Chairman of Genocide Watch.

On Oct. 4 2021, Time Magazine, published

an important article detailing how India is headed on the path of a full blown anti-Muslim genocide.

FACEBOOK ACCUSED OF STALLING INDIA REPORT

An article in the weekend edition of the Wall Street Journal quoted human rights advocates as accusing Facebook of stalling its report on steps it is taking to identify and delete hate speech. Detailed coverage in Washington Post, New York Times, and Associated Press have quoted extensively from whistleblower Haugen's submissions to the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission and other documents to reveal how Facebook knowingly allowed anti-Muslim hate speech and incitement to violence to proliferate in India.



AFMI



The last year was a tough one for many people around the world. For the second time in a row, we will be observing Ramadan in a pandemic. Millions have been left destitute & without income because of the pandemic & its effect on the Indian economy.

In this last year, AFMI has been reaching out with support to the neediest in India

AFMI's initiatives in the last year include: Should read as follows

- ❖ Provided safe drinking water to thousands of flood-affected families in Hyderabad.
- ❖ Launched safe drinking water facility in Rajasthan which currently supports twenty-two villages.
- ❖ Provided meals to thousands of families across India.
- ❖ Helped teaching and other staff of schools with income supports.
- ❖ Provided scholarships to students.
- ❖ Helped schools with construction projects in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and elsewhere.
- ❖ Provided ventilators to hospitals in Gujarat.
- ❖ Provided shelter and clothing to families affected by the pandemic and economic distress.



The need is great, & our resources limited. Let us come together & resolve to do whatever we can to improve the conditions of the needy. Through our collective efforts, we can work wonders.

Please donate generously to AFMI's projects which have real-life impacts on thousands of lives. Donations can be made securely online at www.afmi.org

May these blessed days be a means for us to connect with our Lord and our community, & to share together in gratitude.

Ramadan Mubarak!

Thousands of orphans
are forgotten because of
the way they look.



We ask you to
choose **with love**