



Organisation Franco-Egyptienne pour les Droits de l'Homme

Franco-Egyptian Organization for Human Rights

المنظمة الفرنسية المصرية لحقوق الإنسان – أوفيد

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Islamophobia or Blasphemy?

The Freedom of Religion, Believes, Conscience or Thoughts are among the major objects and actions of our Organization, the Franco Egyptian for Human Rights based in Paris, France. Islamist terrorist attacks in European cities are very much related to the Religious freedom. My topic is: Islamophobia or Blasphemy.

Phobia means “fearing of”. We can find on Internet hundreds of terms referring to phobia, but only few are used in the everyday-languages. Popular ones are **Xenophobia**, Fear of foreigners; **Homophobia**, Fear of homosexuality; **Claustrophobia**- Fear of confined spaces, Islamophobia, Fear of Islam. But we don’t often use the other terms like “ **Chronomentrophobia**, Fear of clocks” ,which is my case now for my 3 min speech. As you notice, phobia-term has been implemented for one religion only: Islam. We don’t use **Chritianophobia**, **Judeophobia** (not to mix with anti-Semitism), **Buddismophobia**, **Hindouismophobia**, or **Atheismophobia**. In several western countries this lead to the promulgation of laws using this vague term which lacks real precision, bringing people to court, condemning them to a fine or to prison because of criticism to Islam religion. The direct result is taking away from people one of the of the Human Rights fundamentals: the “Freedom of expression, the freedom to speak, i.e. “shut your mouth or else...”. In France, many lawyers well financed, are devoted to trace people to bring them to court. Many do not dare anymore to express their thoughts. Therefore the most appropriate and more precise term to use is “Blasphemy”. Blasphemy against Islam, as it is currently used by some Moslem countries.

For example, Egypt who is currently waging an unprecedented war against Islamist terrorism (Isis just killed 20 military officers and soldiers in the North of Sinai) is confronted to that.

Under President Sadat, religious conflicts broke-out when in June 1981, Islamist Groups used the mosque platforms to insult Christianity, burning-down Coptic Christian properties, houses and shops. A “Blasphemy law” was then adopted by adding an article (98) to the Penal code, aiming to protect the Christian Coptic minority from the violent Islamist groups by criminalizing the abuse of another religion. The outcome was exactly the opposite. This law was applied one-way, and rather facilitated condemning the Copts. Later the law was used by radical Islamist groups and Salafist Imams who dominated the society and the media scene. It became a tool of oppression on Muslim liberals, artists, writers, philosophers, intellectuals, journalists. More recently it was used against Moslem thinkers and religious imams who are trying to modernize their religion and work on the different interpretations. The Moslem Ph.D. Researcher Islam el Biheiry was condemned to 3 years of prison and amnestied by President Sisi just before the end of term. Imam Mohamed Abdallah Nasr, with a Theology degree in Islam from Al Azhar was brought to justice by Al Azhar on nine lawsuits. Judgements on five of them brought him a cumulative 13 years in prison. How many more years he will get for the remaining four lawsuits? Ten ONG’s, together with many intellectuals, and a group of Deputies in the Egyptian parliament asked to abolish this Blasphemy law

We are recommending that the OSCE States:

1. End the use of the term Islamophobia in all official documents and speeches and if necessary use the term Blasphemy, in case there is a need.
2. Send an official call to the Egyptian president for the release of all those who have been convicted by the courts on account of their accusation of blasphemy of religion and mainly Imam Mohamed Abdallah Nasr, a real victim of the Islamists Extremists.