**Uniting the Muslim Ummah against Islamophobia**

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The Muslim Ummah is facing three major problems; the burning issue of Kashmir, Palestine and the mounting threat to Muslims in the form of increasing Islamophobia–a menace justified in the name of the freedom of expression in the West.

Prime Minister Imran Khan talked about Islamophobia at least twice during last couple of days while addressing a function and addressing the nation from Islamabad. He called for unity amongst the Muslim Ummah and suggested that all 50 Muslim states unanimously boycott trade with any western country where blasphemy is committed and Islamophobia is practiced at an official or civilian level. Even boycotting products of any country that promotes Islamophobia will be like hitting its economy and will be more effective than merely halting diplomatic relations.

Apparently, this is a gigantic task which the PM has taken upon himself and assumed the role of the leader of the campaign. It is a positive move in the right direction as the collective voice of the Islamic world will certainly carry more weight and impact than that of Pakistan alone.

[Head of UK Labour party accused of undermining Muslims](https://nation.com.pk/27-Apr-2021/head-of-uk-labour-party-accused-of-undermining-muslims)

In all fairness, PM Imran Khan can very easily be ranked to be amongst the first leaders of the Islamic world to raise the issue of Islamophobia at an international level and continues to raise his voice for effectively combating this problem by calling upon the Western countries and their leaders to show respect to the sentiments and beliefs of the Muslims.

Tackling the menace of Islamophobia was the main theme of his address at the 14th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, in June 2019, within months of him coming into power.

This was followed by his maiden address to the 74th UN General Assembly session in New York in September 2019 when he mentioned that trends of nationalism, increased global tensions and giving rise to racial and religious hatred and violence against vulnerable minorities had accentuated Islamophobia. He further explained that Muslims continue to be targeted with impunity in many countries and that our shrines are being destroyed, our Prophet (PBUH) insulted and the Holy Quran was being burnt all in the name of freedom of speech. It was on this occasion that the PM called upon the world to declare an ‘International Day to Combat Islamophobia’ and build a coalition to fight this scourge which, most unfortunately, divides humanity.

[Iran's IRGC vessels Harass US ships in Persian Gulf](https://nation.com.pk/27-Apr-2021/iran-s-irgc-vessels-harass-us-ships-in-persian-gulf)

In his virtual address to the 75th UN General Assembly session in September 2020, the PM called for willful provocations and the incitement of hate and violence to be universally outlawed. He repeated his demand of the declaration of an international day to combat the menace of Islamophobia.

Continuing his efforts to highlight the evil impact of Islamophobia in the western world, the PM addressed letters to the leaders of all Muslim countries in October and November 2020 wherein he had asked for collective action by the Muslim Ummah against Islamophopbia. He has also been raising the issue of Islamophobia on other international forums including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).

The intense diplomatic efforts of Pakistan have started showing a positive response from the Muslim Ummah as a key resolution was adopted by the OIC recently as well. It authorised the OIC Permanent Missions in New York to jointly table a resolution in the UN General Assembly for designating March 15 as the ‘International Day to Combat Islamophobia’.

[Biden pledges US support as India faces COVID wave](https://nation.com.pk/26-Apr-2021/biden-pledges-us-support-as-india-faces-covid-wave)

Furthermore, the resolution urged OIC Member States to organise and support various high-visibility events aimed at effectively increasing awareness at all levels about curbing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. Monitoring the phenomenon of Islamophobia was encouraged according to the resolution and the UN Secretary General was to initiate a global dialogue on countering rising Islamophobia and promoting inter-faith harmony.

Needless to say that, as pledged by the PM, Pakistan will continue to utilise all available avenues at the bilateral and multi-lateral levels to persistently and effectively counter Islamphobia.

It is a long drawn battle but a step in the right direction has been taken. The continuous efforts by the entire Muslim Ummah in this regard may start showing some signs of impact sooner or later.

Pakistan’s missions and embassies abroad, particularly in the western countries, also need to be actively involved with the intelligentsia, public leaders, media people and elected representatives and tell them repeatedly and emphatically that if the Holocaust is not mentioned and talked about in the West, Islamophobia is not acceptable either.