

Number of 'Islamophobic groups' reaches new high, Muslim group says

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—A Muslim civil rights organization says a record number of groups are spreading hatred of Muslims and have raised more than \$200 million since 2008.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim advocacy group, issued its findings in a report conducted with the Center for Race and Gender at the University of California, Berkeley.

Report lists 74 organizations

The report, titled "Confronting Fear: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States," lists 74 organizations its authors consider Muslim-oriented hatemongers and their supporters, a list that has grown by five since the last report in 2013.

"Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim propaganda, has unfortunately moved from the fringes of American society to the mainstream," said Nihad Awad, the council's executive director. He cited Donald Trump's proposed ban on Muslims entering the U.S. and Sen. Ted Cruz's suggestion that "Muslim neighborhoods" be monitored as outgrowths of that propaganda.

"It reminds me of what happened to the Jews in Europe and Germany," he said.

Identifies two tiers

The report describes an "inner core" of 33 U.S.-based organizations CAIR

characterizes as Islamophobic, defined as actively “contriving” and promoting hate and fear of Muslims and Islam.

Among the groups named are the David Horowitz Freedom Center, Jihad Watch, PamelaGeller.com and the Forum for Middle East Understanding.

An “outer core” of 41 organizations and influential individuals is described as supporting the inner core through “work (that) regularly demonstrates or supports Islamophobic themes.”

This list includes *The Washington Times*, Fox News, HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, Rush Limbaugh, and the Joyce and Donald Rumsfeld Foundation, among others.

Together, the 74 groups comprise what CAIR calls “the U.S. Islamophobia network.”

Not just criticism of Islam and Muslims

The council noted both in the study and in the announcement of its release that it is not opposed to criticism of Islam and Muslims.

“We believe in strong conversation in this country,” said Corey Saylor, the report’s main author. “But we want to see those who push Islamophobia on the fringes of society and not in the mainstream.”

Some named organizations take issue

But David Horowitz, whose autonomous organization made the list for the second time, defended his work combating extremism as fair and free speech.

“You cannot find one sentence I have ever uttered that can be called anti-Muslim,” he said. “I have said countless times that most Muslims are law-abiding people who want to keep their children out of trouble. However,

there is a large segment that wants Holy War.”

Horowitz described CAIR as “a front for Hamas,” the Palestinian militant group, and “a creation of the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Usama Dakdok, founder of the Straight Way of Grace Ministry, is a new addition to CAIR’s list. Addressing himself to Americans, he said, “You are destroying yourself because of your ignorance of Islam.”