



ISLAMOPHOBIA: A CRASH COURSE

PART 2 — UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

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Rumanah Wellness is a public benefit platform empowering Muslim women toward holistic, embodied wellness:

- **Ruh** — Spiritual connection
- **Roots** — Cultural context & individuality
- **Rhythm** — Life stage & personal journey

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THE FOUNDATION OF CHANGE: PERSONAL INTEREST

Before people can engage, act, or create change, they must first feel a personal connection to the issue.

Personal interest is what transforms information into meaning. It is the moment when an issue stops being about others and begins to feel relevant to our own values, experiences, and responsibilities.



CONNECTION

When we see ourselves reflected in the struggle



RELEVANCE

When issues align with our values and experiences



RESPONSIBILITY

When we recognize our role in creating change

So let's build a stronger interest in understanding the impacts of Islamophobia as we climb up our ladder.

IMPACT 1

PHYSICAL HARM

One of the heaviest impacts of Islamophobia is physical harm.

Our community in Canada has been the victim of many serious hate crimes, giving Canada the title of having the highest number of targeted hate-motivated killings of Muslims amongst all G7 countries.

In the last years, it seems that there isn't a month that goes by without a report of a violent islamophobic incident in Canada.





THE REALITY OF VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

TARGETED KILLINGS

Canada leads the G7 in hate-motivated murders of Muslims

REGULAR INCIDENTS

Violent islamophobic incidents reported every month

COMMUNITY FEAR

Constant vigilance and anxiety about safety in daily life

📄 **May Allah protect us all**



IMPACT 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM

The wounds of Islamophobia go far beyond what we can see on the surface. The psychological impact is profound and measurable.

Studies show that Muslim youth who experience discrimination are at higher risk for depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress.

THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Post-traumatic stress

PHYSICAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

- Higher stress hormone levels
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Diabetes

The stress of discrimination doesn't just stay in the mind — it has a downstream effect. Research on racial discrimination links it to higher stress hormone levels, high blood pressure, and other stress-related illnesses like obesity and diabetes.

This means Islamophobia is not just a social problem — it's a public health problem.



IMPACT 3

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION

Islamophobia can create invisible lines between people. People who belong and can be trusted, and those who should be kept at a distance.

Over time, this can erode friendships, weaken community bonds, and replace trust with suspicion.



WHEN NEIGHBORS BECOME STRANGERS

- ❏ **Recent incident in Newmarket, Ontario:** Police charged a man for allegedly planning to bomb a local mosque and his Muslim neighbour's house. This man lived beside his Muslim neighbour for 14 years.



INVISIBLE LINES

Divisions form between those who "belong" and those who don't



ERODED TRUST

Relationships weakened by suspicion and fear



BROKEN BONDS

Community connections replaced with distance and hostility

Social fragmentation doesn't just harm Muslims, it weakens the fabric of society itself.

IMPACT 4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Islamophobia directly affects people's economic opportunities.

Across Western countries, Muslims experience lower wages, higher unemployment, and greater job instability, even when they have equal or higher levels of education.



THE ECONOMIC COST OF DISCRIMINATION

INDIVIDUAL BARRIERS

- Lower wages compared to equally qualified peers
- Higher unemployment rates
- Greater job instability
- Barriers in hiring and promotion
- Workplace safety concerns
- Discrimination based on names, appearance, or perceived identity

SOCIETAL COSTS

Moreover, the cost of Islamophobia to society as a whole cannot be overlooked:

- Lost productivity and innovation
- Underutilization of educated workforce
- Healthcare costs from discrimination-related illness
- Social services burden from economic inequality
- Reduced economic growth and competitiveness



IMPACT 5

INTERNALIZED RACISM

Internalized racism happens when people begin to absorb the negative messages society places on their identity.

Over time, repeated exposure to Islamophobia can lead to individuals silencing a part of themselves, or distancing themselves from their culture or faith.

THE SILENT HARM WITHIN

SELF-SILENCING

Hiding aspects of identity to avoid discrimination or judgment

CULTURAL DISTANCE

Withdrawing from cultural practices and community connections

FAITH HESITATION

Questioning or minimizing religious practice due to external pressure

When people internalize the hatred directed at them, they begin to see themselves through the lens of their oppressors.

IMPACT 6

SPIRITUAL INJURY

Spiritual injury occurs when repeated harm, fear, or rejection begins to affect a person's relationship with faith itself.

If faith becomes associated with pain or danger, then the injury goes beyond the emotional — it touches the soul.





WHEN FAITH BECOMES A WOUND

THE SACRED COMPROMISED

When religious practice brings fear instead of peace

When prayer spaces become sites of potential violence

When faith identity becomes a liability

THE SOUL IMPACT

Disconnection from spiritual community

Questioning the safety of belief

Loss of the sanctuary that faith should provide

This is perhaps the deepest wound — when the source of comfort and meaning becomes entangled with trauma and fear.



IMPACT 7

PERPETUATION OF RACISM

Allowing Islamophobia to take hold in society means that we are okay with the propagation of racism — amongst other groups.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF NORMALIZED HATE

PRECEDENT SETTING

When discrimination against one group is normalized, it creates permission structures for discrimination against others

EROSION OF RIGHTS

Policies targeting Muslims today pave the way for policies targeting other marginalized communities tomorrow

COLLECTIVE HARM

A society that tolerates Islamophobia is a society that tolerates racism in all its forms

Fighting Islamophobia is not just about protecting Muslims — it's about protecting the basic human rights and dignity of all people.



RECAP

THE SEVEN IMPACTS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

01

PHYSICAL HARM

Hate crimes, violence, and threats to safety

02

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM

Mental health impacts and stress-related illness

03

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION

Broken trust and weakened community bonds

04

INTERNALIZED RACISM

Absorbing negative messages about identity

05

SPIRITUAL INJURY

Harm to relationship with faith itself

06

PERPETUATION OF RACISM

Normalizing discrimination across all groups

07

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Barriers to opportunity and economic inequality

WHAT'S NEXT

PART 3 WILL EXAMINE: WHAT CAN BE DONE

Understanding the impacts is crucial, but it's only part of the journey.

Next, we'll explore concrete actions, strategies for advocacy, and pathways toward creating meaningful change in our communities and institutions.

From individual action to systemic reform, we'll examine how each of us can contribute to dismantling Islamophobia and building a more just society.

