When Remarks by Politicians Fuel the Phenomenon of Fear of Islam – "Islamophobia"



In the name of Allah, all Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds; and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Mohamed (PBUH), and upon his kinship, and all his companions and whoever follows his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia is defined as the fear of, or hostility toward, Islam and Muslims –based on fabricated claims, unfair generalizations, and preconceived notions– which leads to prejudice, discrimination, or incitement against them on the basis of their religion. It is distinct from an objective critique of ideas and practices, which is grounded in argument and historical facts, which upholds human dignity and rights.

This phenomenon emerges and expands due to ignorance about Islam, negative historical legacies, and stereotypes that link Muslims to violence and backwardness. It is fueled by conflicts over interests and hegemony, anxieties surrounding migration and cultural difference, and media narratives that generalize the misdeeds of a few to all (Muslims). In this climate, some politicians exploit these fears during election contests, turning existing prejudices into a tool to rally supporters and secure votes.

When Hatred Becomes Campaign Rhetoric

In support of Republican candidate Mike Rogers in his election campaign against his opponent, Dr. Abdulrahman Mohamed El-Sayed, known as Abdul El-Sayed, an Arab American Muslim, Robert Kennedy Jr. – the U.S. Secretary

of Health and Human Services – claimed during a campaign rally in the state of Michigan on 26 October 2026 that the world's "500 million Arabs" do not produce science or literature, and do not win major international honors such as the Nobel Prize, Fields Medal, or Wolf Prize. Furthermore, the American minister blamed the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928) for allegedly destroying intellectual traditions and creating stagnant societies.

These allegations came as a shock to two groups: first, Arabs and Muslims – both inside and outside the United States– due to the hostility and racism they embody; second, fair-minded American citizens, who realized that some of their own officials are undermining the rights of American citizenship and the values of the U.S. Constitution – values that do not discriminate among people based on race or religion.

Such disparagement of individuals based on their origins contradicts the standard of human dignity established by the holy Quran, for Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Israa: ﴿ And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.﴾ (Al Israa: 70)

The impact of this shock was compounded by the fact that U.S. President Donald Trump followed suit; within the context of the election, he made racist remarks against Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, further escalating his rhetoric with even more pointed, religiously and racially charged insinuations.

The statements made by the US President and the American Secretary of Health and Human Services evoke an era that humanity had moved past – an era for which it paid a staggering price during the World War II, in the struggle against those who claimed the supremacy of the Aryan race and asserted its inherent superiority over others.

However, the holy Quran invalidated the claim of superiority based on lineage or race, tracing all humanity back to a single origin and establishing the diversity of peoples as a means for mutual acquaintance, for Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Hujurat: ﴿ O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. ﴾ (Al Hujurat: 13)

It is easy to cite established scientific facts that exonerate every human race from the characterization of "genetic backwardness" – a label that would imply it is inferior to others – and to demonstrate that every major civilization has contributed to the cumulative cultural and scientific heritage that humanity has amassed over the centuries.

Among these civilizations is the civilization of Islam, which embraced the various inherited civilizations across our expansive world, assimilated them, and enriched them with its own unique contributions. This is attested to by the historical records of science, as well as by the writings of fair-minded Western scholars – such as George Sarton, Charles Burnett, Will Durant, Gustave Le Bon, Thomas Carlyle, Sigrid Hunke, and many others; the list is extensive.

Scientific Backwardness: Between Despotism and Colonialism

If it is argued that civilizational backwardness is the current reality for Arabs and Muslims, then this only underscores the need to examine the factors that caused a nation with a deep-rooted scientific heritage to fall behind in the race of progress. In this context, American and Western leaders will find themselves the target of criticism and accusation; for this is the bitter harvest of decades of colonial domination – in its various forms – during which underdevelopment was imposed upon Arab and Muslim lands through a multitude of means, including the imposition of oppressive, authoritarian regimes in many of our countries.

Despotism is not merely a political problem; it is one of the greatest obstacles to the production of knowledge. In fact, these regimes perform functional roles that serve the demands of the colonialism that brought them into existence – a colonialism under whose command they operate and by whose will they endure – while prioritizing the preservation of their own security and survival. To this end, their security apparatuses consume the bulk of their nations' budgets, while political and economic corruption devours most of what remains.

As a result, scientific institutions collapse, investment allocations for research and development vanish, and the status of scientists declines; they face political and military oppression, while the scope for academic freedom shrinks. Consequently, they find no alternative but to succumb to the allure of the West – migrating there, where paths to research and innovation are opened up for them. In this way, the Arab and Islamic world loses its finest minds – compounded by the scientific and intellectual blockade imposed upon our countries, the systematic plunder of their resources, and the blatant persecution of the promising and brilliant minds that remain.

We could list the names of prominent scientists who found the horizons for research too limited in their own countries, but for whom the West provided the necessary opportunities – allowing them to excel. Among them are Dr. Ahmed Zewail (1946–2016), an Egyptian American chemist who won the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry; Dr. Farouk El-Baz, (born January 2, 1938) a prominent Egyptian-American geologist and space scientist renowned for -his critical contributions to NASA's Apollo program; Omar Yaghi, (born February 9, 1965), a Jordanian-American Saudi chemist and professor at the University of California, Berkeley, renowned for pioneering reticular chemistry and inventing metal–organic frameworks (MOFs) – who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2025; Elias Zerhouni, (born April 12, 1951), a prominent Algerian American physician-scientist, radiologist, and biomedical engineer, who is widely recognized for serving as the 15th. Director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) from 2002 to 2008 and as the President of Global Research & Development at Sanofi. ; and many others.

In recalling the atrocities experienced by the East under American bombardment, our intention is not to respond to one form of fanaticism with another; rather, we aim to set the record straight and highlight the American role in imposing scientific and civilizational backwardness.

We are commanded to act with justice, even toward those with whom we are in conflict; for Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Maidah: ﴿ O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do. ﴾ (Al Maidah: 8)

Our blood continues to flow as a result of the Zionist aggression – backed by American money and weaponry – against the people of Palestine, especially in Gaza. The killing and destruction have claimed the lives of hundreds of scholars and researchers, as well as thousands of students, while infrastructure – including universities, institutes, schools, and research centers – has also been targeted.

The Zionist-American aggressors believed they had gotten away with the atrocities they committed in Gaza over the

past two years; yet, Gaza ended up leaving its mark on the American political landscape – and on the consciousness of the American people – during the recent congressional elections.

The backwardness of societies for objective reasons does not justify contempt for their people, just as racist generalizations do not absolve those who make them from understanding history, nor do they absolve America and the West from responsibility for the fate of scientific research in our country.

A single example of the outcomes of American policies in the Arab world is just enough to deflate the arrogant claim that Arab underdevelopment is inevitable. As early as the 1980s, Iraq offered a promising model in terms of its scientific and research infrastructure – until American policy intervened, ultimately imposing a blockade on its people that lasted for over a decade.

Then, in the early third millennium, the aggression against Iraq came, destroying its scientific infrastructure and paving the way for a sectarian civil war that targeted the country's scholars – killing hundreds of them and forcing others to flee. Meanwhile, the invading military machine plundered Iraq's museums, manuscript centers, and archives – either by carrying out the looting itself or by turning a blind eye to those who did.

Islamophobia from Positions of Power

The US president's statements in this regard raise genuine concerns about fueling Islamophobia – even though those targeted are citizens who were born and have lived in the United States, under the protection of its constitutional and legal framework.

The U.S. President labeled Dr. Abdul El‑Sayed a "terrorist" who should not be permitted access to the nation's "most closely‑guarded national security secrets" and influence over the military, borders, and homeland security; and likened his potential entry into the Senate to a terrorist entering the US Capitol – invoking the events of 9/11 (claiming that he would be "the only senator that will have to go through a metal detector" before entering the Senate). Trump also stated that he had come to Michigan specifically to prevent a member of the "Muslim Brotherhood" from becoming a U.S. Senator.

Thus, religious or political affiliation has been transformed into grounds for accusation – a development that stands in contradiction to the provisions of the U.S. Constitution and the image that American politicians are keen to project of their country.

As for the standard of the Quran, it does not treat religious or political affiliation as evidence of guilt; rather, it requires those making an accusation to provide proof, as Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Baqarah: ﴿ ... Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful." ﴾ (Al Baqarah: 111)

If we recall previous statements by U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth – who has explicitly used the term "crusade" to frame the defense of Judeo‑Christian values and stated in his writings that Islam is "not a religion of peace, and it never has been." – it becomes clear that the wave of Islamophobia in the United States does not originate from fringe figures, but rather from officials in leadership positions, or even from the U.S. President himself.

It is extremely dangerous, given the power, influence, and reach that America commands in the world today. Furthermore, it lends credence to the concept of a "clash of civilizations" – a notion promoted by Samuel Huntington

that carries ominous implications – as the world's greatest material power falls under the control of those who lack a sense of justice and fail to respect human values and sentiments.

Our world today – teeming as it is with sources of misery and injustice – does not need those who fuel discord among its peoples or beat the drums of religious and ethnic conflict. Rather, it is in dire need of broad human connection, an equitable perspective on the issues facing its various peoples, and the establishment of the values of tolerance and peace.

The holy Quran has opened the door to righteousness and justice in dealings with those of other faiths, provided they do not commit aggression, for Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Mumtahina: ﴿ Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.﴾ (Al Mumtahina: 8)

This is the essence of the message of Islam, which we invite people to understand and reflect upon, as Allah Almighty says in Surat Al Nahl: ﴿ Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. ﴾ (Al Nahl: 90)

Allah Is the Greatest, and Praise Be to Allah,

Dr. Salah Abdel Haq

Acting Muslim Brotherhood General Guide

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