

Media Release

Growing anti-Muslim Prejudice Result of Secular Liberal Ideology and Politics

An Essential Research poll released yesterday found 49% of Australians support a ban on Muslim immigration primarily due to “fears of terrorism” and the belief that Muslims don’t share “Australian values” or integrate. Whatever the accuracy of this particular poll, there is little doubt that anti-Muslim sentiment is growing throughout the West.

Hizb ut Tahrir Australia emphasises the following in this regard:

1. The hardening of anti-Muslim sentiment is alarming but hardly surprising. It is the obvious and expected result of a 15 year politically motivated campaign to encourage hatred and suspicion of Islam and Muslims. A campaign instigated by mainstream politicians and dutifully carried by the mainstream media. A campaign that used terrorism as the excuse to implant the false idea that Islamic beliefs were the cause of violence, so Islam itself was the suspect and needed reform. For fifteen years straight all things Islam have been abused as a political football by politicians and demonised in the media. For fifteen years straight Islam and Muslims have been viewed squarely through the prism of national security, terrorism, values and integration. What other result can we possibly expect?

2. The irony is that in the last decade and a half two Muslim countries were invaded and destroyed by western powers, the Arab uprisings exploited for western benefit to devastating effect as in Syria, dictators were propped up and supported in the Muslim world, all sorts of abuses committed in the like of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, yet somehow those who have been the worse victims are now considered the problem. Indeed, those who lost everything and were forced to seek refuge elsewhere are seen as most suspect. This is the logic of blind prejudice fostered by narrow political agendas.

3. While the far right has become the face of this open prejudice, to focus critique on it would be to miss the mark. It is the mainstream of politics that created the social and political environment that fosters suspicion and hate of Islam, which those on the “fringe” exploit. The path for the open prejudice of the likes of Pauline Hanson is paved by the agendas and policies of the likes of John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Tony Abbot and Malcolm Turnbull. The latter scapegoat the former – recent comments at the UN by President Obama and PM Turnbull on refugees being a case in point – while it is their policies that are the core of the problem. That is where our critique must be focused.

4. What we have here, ultimately, is the remarkable failure of the secular liberal paradigm and its resultant politics. An ideology which encourages selfishness and individualism, the relegation of the spiritual, the primacy of the material, the commercialisation of everything, and the division of humanity into arbitrary “nations”, each motivated by its own narrow “national interest”. The result is a world of powerful nations exploiting weaker nations by whatever means they can, in each of which the elite classes exploit the masses by whatever means they can. The prevailing political systems, thoroughly corrupted by the influence of corporations, have no solutions to real human problems faced by the masses, in whom the lowly sentiment of nationalism and patriotism is always latent. The result of scapegoating one minority or another is predictable.

5. In this context, Muslims have a formidable challenge. We must not only face increasingly hate and prejudice with the nobility that Islam demands but we must do so while on the front foot. Going insular and defensive is not an option for us, for such is entirely out of sync with the noble prophetic way. We must be on the front foot, critiquing the mainstream ideology and system and showing how Islam alone, far from being the problem, is the need of the time. We must move beyond the narrow politics of self-image and compromise to a politics of truth, resistance of oppression and leadership of humanity.

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