

EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE ON RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA
OBSERVATOIRE EUROPÉEN DES PHÉNOMÈNES RACISTES ET XÉNOPHOBES
EUROPÄISCHE STELLE ZUR BEOBACHTUNG VON RASSISMUS UND FREMDENFEINDLICHKEIT



Anti-Islamic reactions in the EU
after the terrorist acts against the USA

A collection of country reports from RAXEN
National Focal Points (NFPs)

12th September to 31st December 2001

PORTUGAL

NUMENA – Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas
(Research center on human and social sciences)

Following the terror attacks in the USA on 11th September the EUMC found that there was a pressing need to closely follow the possible negative repercussions on racial and xenophobic attitudes and events in civil societies in Europe. On the basis of national reports drafted by its RAXEN network of National Focal Points (NFPs), the EUMC produced a first short-term report on anti-Islamic reactions in all countries of the European Union on 9th October 2001.

In order to have a longer term and regular monitoring on attitudes/incidents towards Muslim/Islamic communities and other vulnerable groups, the EUMC decided to follow up the first report and continue to closely monitor the situation at least until the end of the year 2001.

It therefore asked the RAXEN NFPs to produce additional reports, monitoring the situation on a monthly basis until the end of the year; in addition, it asked for a final report analysing the overall developments from 11th September to 31st December 2001.

According to the EUMC request, the reports have addressed in particular the following issues:

- acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU population towards ethnic, cultural or religious minorities (especially Muslim/Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups or new types of victims), related to the recent terrorist attacks in the USA;
- good practices and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence;
- reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends.

In addition to the summary report written on behalf of the EUMC by Prof. Nielsen and Mr. Allen of the University of Birmingham, the following pages contain the original reports submitted by each NFP for the whole period.

Not all reports have been made available from all countries, but the coverage is however complete. The reports are quite varying in size. It should be considered that the Member States have different systems in collecting data: some have implemented a rather elaborated and comprehensive approach, while others have done what they could to get information about the situation in the Member State.

The task of the RAXEN network is to collect reliable and comparable data (including examples of and models for “good practices”) at the European level on the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in order to help the EU and its Member States to take measures or formulate courses of action. For further information please visit the EUMC homepage <http://eumc.eu.int>

Vienna, 23 May 2002

First short-term report

Verbal and physical attacks

So far there have been no official complaints of physical or verbal injuries inflicted on the Muslim Community as a result of the recent events in the USA.

On September 15th several newspapers published stories about a bomb threat to the Lisbon Mosque. The Lisbon Islamic Community stated that this incident led to the interruption of prayer by the police bomb squad, which searched the premises.

More recently, a representative of the Lisbon Islamic Community reported that the Lisbon Mosque was vandalized on 18/9/2001. More precisely, some windows were broken with stones during the night. Still, another leader of the same community appeared on national television reporting the same event but adding that such occurrences are commonplace. In spite of this, the Procurador Geral da República has, so far, received no complaint.

Nevertheless, all the great religions were present in a gathering intended to homage the victims of the terrorist attack. At this event the Muslim community's representative – Sheik Munir - prayed for the dead.

20th September 2001

Report on anti-Islamic and anti-Arabic reactions after the terrorist acts in the USA – Reactions from 25th September to 19th October

The Islamic Community in Portugal comprises two main branches: the Sunnite community and the Ismailian community. The main thing that should be noticed about the Islamic Community in Portugal is his smallness. In fact, Portugal presents the lowest proportion of Muslim in all European countries (0,3%). Two main fluxes of Islamic people are of importance. A first one that arrived after the decolonisation period and came from Moçambique and Guiné-Bissau; and other that is more recent and also more fragmented in terms of origin, that span from Guiné and Senegal to Pakistan. The first flux was foremost from the middle class, notably entrepreneurs and liberal professionals. Concerning the more recent fluxes, almost those arriving from Pakistan are of poor condition.

It is not possible to fully understand the phenomenon of the relation of the Portuguese people with the Islamic culture without looking at some cultural and historical aspects of our country. Unfortunately, we had no time to present here a thorough characterization of the Muslim community in Portugal, who no doubt has some specific aspects that make it different from the muslim communities in other European countries, mainly due to our colonial past. It is also important to distinguish a Muslim community settled in Portugal for many years, of about 30 000 people, that came mostly from Mozambique, from a recent wave of immigration from Muslim countries, mainly from Pakistan. The degree of integration of this people is

completely different, and goes back, among other aspects, to its legal status in Portugal, for the rights of someone who already has Portuguese nationality are considerably different from the rights of someone who is still in an illegal situation, or is a bearer of an “Autorização de Permanência¹”.

Therefore, it is important to determine who are the Muslims in Portugal, what kind of relation they have with each other, what kind of integration they have in our society, and also what is the nature of their relationship with other immigrants. This last topic is also important because recently Portugal has been receiving a significant wave of immigration, mostly from countries from the former Soviet Union who, unlike people who came from the former Portuguese colonies, don't have any common cultural background with the Portuguese people. Besides that, some of these people were involved, in a more or less direct way, with the conflicts in Tchetchenia or even in Afghanistan, or other less known problems. There are also people who come from countries that are now mainly Muslim, like the Uzbekistan. For these reasons, we find it pertinent to refer this phenomenon in a more profound way in further reports.

Another aspect that cannot be forgotten is the occupation of the Portuguese territory by Muslims for over 8 centuries. The Arabians conquered almost all the Iberia Peninsula in the year 711, and were only totally expelled in 1492, with the taken of Granada by the Catholics. Muslims held Lisbon until the year 1147, and the conquest of the region of Algarve (this name has an Arabic provenience) was only completed in 1249. One very important aspect to consider is that the autochthon people were never forced to accept the Islamic faith. However, the Muslims left an important legacy, including some technical knowledge that was fundamental for the posterior adventures of the Portuguese people in the sea, which brought “new worlds to the world”.

We don't intend to present here an intensive historical analysis, for this would take us from our objective. Nevertheless, and as it was said before, we can not fully understand the effects that the attacks in New York had in the Muslim community in Portugal without situating these events in the particular context of our society, which we intend to do in the next reports.

Verbal and physical attacks

After more than a month from the terrible incidents in the United States, the police and Islamic authorities have still no notion of any physical violence towards Muslim or other minorities' people. Besides the earlier acts of vandalism perpetrated against the Lisbon Mosque, no such actions were noticed. In addition, the major organisations in combating racism contacted by Numena did not report any incidents of this kind or any complaint of aggression. However, verbal injuries were told to have happened, especially towards Muslim women

The Islamic Community leader informed Numena that women carrying scarves were importunate when walking in the streets. The Community has advised women to avoid walking alone and not pay attention to any disrespect that they may be the target. The Ismaili

¹ This Autorização de Permanência consists in a Visa that allows immigrants who enter the Portuguese territory to legalize their situation, as long as they present a valid passport and a work contract obtained already in the country. This Visa grants them the right to remain in the Portuguese territory and work there paying social security and taxes and enjoying the rights associated to it for 1 year, eventually renewable for 4 more years.

community did not report any complaint from their members. It stated to Numena that verbal abuse had not suffered any change comparing the usual pattern.

It seems that Sikh community voiced most of the complaints (Público 12/10/2001 – annex 7). Because Sikh people usually wear turban they have been seldom named “Bin Laden” or “taliban” The more expressive case was that of a Sikh stopped by the police who asked him his papers stating “Bin Laden, show me your documents”. Other cases of this kind have been reported to happen in public transports. Soon after these events the television broadcasted some journalistic peaces showing the everyday life of the members of the Sikh community. Those television peaces intended to emphasise the peaceful way of live of the Sikh community, dissociating them from Islam.

We also know by a testimony of Portuguese professors in immigrant classes (notably in the Jesuit Refugees Service in Portugal) that soon after the events in the USA acts of verbal aggression occurred between Russians and Pakistani pupils. At the employment sector level, Pakistani have been rejected in favour of eastern workers; and some long employed Pakistani workers, especially in the tourist sector, were lay off with no justification whatsoever.

Politicians discourse and opinion makers attitudes

The overall picture has been one of conciliation between Portuguese and Islamic people living in Portugal. As we mentioned in our first report summing up the events that had happened since 11 September, almost after the tragedy a great meeting of all major religious confessions in Portugal was organised by the Portuguese Government. That was the first assertion of unity between creeds and inscribed a frontal repudiation of prejudiced and intolerant voices. This happening sought to propel an image of a tolerant and united society where multiculturalism is welcomed. The president has addressed the country conveying the same message and politicians have been cautious in reaffirming that many Islamic states are Portuguese allied.

Nevertheless, the security problem is at the front of most arguments. According those who state that we should act carefully in the future to prevent the free entry of every kind of migrants, make it in the name of security. A statement made by the Internal Affairs Ministry is illustrative: “Naturally the equation integration-migration has as counterpart in the equation liberty-security” (Público 17/10/2001).

On the other hand, right-wing politicians have been hasty to establish a direct link between security and migration. This is one of the most interesting developments in political rhetoric after the USA events. In fact, a somewhat overvalued “securitizing” thought has been convey to the media and to the public. The Popular Party (PP) leader speaks overtly in this tone, stating that security and migration restrictions go hand in hand. This discourse features a direct link between migration and a potential threat to order. Therefore, vehement appeals were made seeking the implementation of a more restrictive migrant policy. Regarding the implementation of a new security model, the leader of the Popular Party suggests the “instruction of the intelligence services in order to surveillance the movements” of people that “came from countries where the social base or the State are under a strong influence of the Islamic fundamentalism” In the same vein, the Popular Party leader considers the surveillance of the Muslim communities a priority, following the Spanish example where 200 persons are under investigation. This peace had the appealing title “Portas wants to surveillance Muslims”

(Público, 11/10/2001 – annex 1. See also annex 2 “PP wants to debate security with the Prime Ministry”). This some idea was more emphatically reiterated through the next statement “The Occident needs more than ever to defend security, by enforcing the secret services and measures towards migrants” (Expresso 7/10/2001 – annex 3)

The most significant opinion makers in the newspapers, although they use abundantly the “Clash of Civilizations” rhetoric, point out the importance of keeping things in perspective, meaning that we should be aware of the dangers of enhancing “Islamophobia” However, this is not without perils. What most of these perspectives seems to take at face value is the moral superiority of the Occident towards Islam. As a corollary, the Islamic Community filled the necessity to justify their pacifist creed and, in doing so, was put before trial.

Correspondingly, the Imam of Lisbon Mosque – Sheik Munir – made a plead to the Portuguese Government to not neglect the Islamic Community. In several occasions, the Islamic Community theologian stated that Government representatives did not made any effort so far to dwindle negative reactions towards the Community. In a recent conference (*Portugal Facing the International Crisis*) promoted by “Sá Carneiro Foundation” (16/10/2001), Sheik Munir point out the fact that no Portuguese authority had visited the Mosque after the 11 September events. He also underlined the essential dissociation between Islam and those radical forms that do not portrait with fairness the Islamic world, ending by stating that, though the Islamic Community in Portugal never had before problems of integration – by the some token, of approval -, for the time being is traversing a period of particular frailty. The same declarations were written in an article in Público (17/10/2001 – annex 5).

One case should, however, be stressed. The “Expresso” front page showed the title “The Islamic Menace” regarding the battle against terrorism. Many protest voices were heard and critics were published. Even in the Parliament, one member – from the left-wing – accused the newspaper of taking an Islamophobic stance. However, in the subsequent week, the Expresso Editorial repeated the analogy between Islam and Terrorism (Expresso 5/10/2001 - annex 4).

Specific Reactions to the Terrorist Attacks

In the 16th of October the Imam of the Lisbon Mosque, Sheik David Munir, took part in a conference about the international situation that the world is facing today after the terrorist attacks. There he expressed is disappointment for the lack of support and interest from the Portuguese government in relation to the muslim community in Portugal since the events that took place in the USA.

He regretted that, until now, no member of the government visited the Mosque or had any word of comfort, and referred to the fact that the Portuguese muslim community is a pacific community. We questioned himself and the Portuguese community about the isolation of the muslim community in relation with the Portuguese society, and of the Portuguese society in relation with the rest of the world. “... We are with you, you have our comfort”... “Have you forgotten us? We are with you, we want to be with you”. A Portuguese radio station – TSF, broadcast his intervention, and its site in the Internet was invaded by commentaries of several Portuguese citizens, which we consider pertinent to refer here. Of the about 50 commentaries

presented we must say that there seems to be a balance between manifestations of support and disagreement to his intervention.

Among these, there are different kinds of approaches to the problem that mean more than just to be in favour or against, as they reveal the importance of other factors that are related to this and other problems of Portuguese society.

First, there are a group of commentaries that we can consider highly racist, for there is no intent whatsoever to support the opinions presented and put the events in its context. Due to the “strong language” used, we cannot present here a literal translation of some of these commentaries. However, what seems to be important is to express the ideas contained there, what can only be done by presenting their utterances: ”Go back to your land. There certainly you will be well taken care”; ”Al-Qaeda has its home base in the Lisbon Mosque”; ”The terrorists can only be hidden in Islamic communities who sympathise with them”; ”They are not here for long, they don’t speak Portuguese”; ”We should do to you what you do to Catholics in Muslim countries”; ”For a terrorist you don’t pretend very well”; ”Death to all Abduls. Arabians go home. Signed: American Racist”; ”No one called you here and you can leave, because you are not needed”; ”We did not forget you. We just don’t care. The Islam does not interest anyone, and what is going on is all the fault of your stupid religion”; ”Let it be clear that we are not with you, and you don’t have our comfort, only our tolerance”; ”I never visited an Islamic country and I don’t want to; ”Who are these people who inspired by a pseudo-religion turn women into slaves”; ”I don’t like these people, and I think I can speak for all women”; ”What a nerve! In a country that was always mainly catholic, these people came I don’t know from where, when no one asked them to, and want us to kneel at their feet to comfort them”; ”You can be with us, but we are not with you, and if your conscience is clear, you don’t have to be worried, because the people is quiet. But don’t expect too much. In here we don’t give our blessing to strangers. We learn to tolerate them with our democracy and with the defence of what we consider to be the fundamental rights”; ”My dear sir, don’t mess with us. Prey all you want, but don’t ask us for explanations; ”Its time for new inquisition! Well taken care of, the Abduls can still be used for paving roads!; ”I would like to join all Islamic people and offer them a trip to Afghanistan”.

Then there are also some softer critics. Those disagree not with the religion itself, but with the specific attitudes taken by the Muslim community in Portugal and by the Sheik. For instance: ”Messages of peace can not be obtained by setting unnecessary fires, and that’s just what this man as done with this declaration: he just gave a contribute to the appearance of conflicts. If you don’t like this country why don’t you leave? Did anyone here ever do you harm, or those of your faith? I was born in Mozambique, and there the “Arabians” were good people, and I miss many of them, who where my companions in childhood”; ”No one as yet heard these Mohamed talking about Bin Laden’s organisation or about the Taliban”; ”The Portuguese Islamic community is pacific. So are we Portuguese people. So What? There is no need for visits”; ”Let’s just stay pacific”; ”I think that all muslim community should give an explanation, or at least a clarification of its position: Are you against or in favour of the terrorists? If these community has in fact nothing to do with what happened, then help to find those who hind behind your religion”; ”Unfortunately, no one heard the Sheik strongly condemning terrorism and its fanatic interpretation of his religion”; ”It as to be said that the Occidental society is not at war with Islam, but Islam as to say that those among them who want to make war against the Occidental world don’t represent them”; ”Don’t ask what this country can do for you, ask what you can do for this country; ”For when the sheik-mate to

the enemies of our society. Let us hope that the Islamic community can condemn, with strong words, the fanatics who use the name of the Islamic Community”.

There are also some critics who point out to the discrimination in the opposite way, that is, from Muslims in relation to the Catholic. For instance: “We have to understand and accept the Islamic faith, but when we want to be Christians in an Islamic country we are segregated and persecuted”; “Yes, but it is not in Portugal that Islamic people can’t find work just because they are Islamic, like it happens with Christians in some Muslim countries”.

Then we have some interventions that lay emphasis on a problem that we intend to develop in future reports, due to its extreme importance “the role that the Portuguese government takes in these events, which is naturally connected with its usual proceedings in complex situations. Some remarks can highlight this point: “Do you want more equality than this? The Portuguese government treats the Muslim community exactly like all the others”; they don’t give a damn. We are all in the same boat, and no one is in command”; “Take your flock and go join your people; “These guys here don’t care for anyone, not even for me that I am white, pay taxes, and am natural from Lisbon for 6 generations”.

Finally, there are some opinions in favour of the intervention of Sheik Munir, and who some times present critics to the Occidental society in general, and to the USA in particular. Sometimes there is also an implicit reference to our colonial past. We consider fundamental to present these testimonies for only by confronting the different opinions is possible to have inaccurate idea of the general trend: “I, as a Portuguese citizen, agree with the Sheik. In this religion, as in all others, exist fundamentalist idiots, and people of good that just want to leave in peace with all human kind. The Portuguese government should have told the Muslim community that his subservience to the USA doesn’t mean that we don’t respect people and religions that should be respected”; “To mix Islamic fundamentalism with Islam is like mixing inquisition with Christianity, or Stalinism with Marxism. Is also not knowing our own history, and the pages of civilization and tolerance written by the peninsular Islam. Almutâmide and Ibn Amar are not the other face of what enriched so much the identity that became ours?”; “It seems that we are afraid of losing the lands that we conquered from the Arabians, for the ones we took from black people and used for more than 500 we already lost forever.”

Another event worth noting was that a migrant from Iraq may have been a victim of discrimination due to the terrorist attacks in USA. He went to the Jesuit Refugee Service in Lisbon and said that he had been fired from the hotel he had been working for the last months. According to his testimony, the employers gave him a few days to leave the hotel and did not pay him all the money they owed. It seems that the events that took place in New York had something to do with what happened, but he started suffering psychological harassment in the work place some time before. This man came in to Portugal in December 1999, and requested political asylum. His request was denied and he made an appeal, with the support of the Portuguese Council for Refugees, which is still under evaluation. As his former employer did not give him a contract, he could not legalize himself by the new law (Autorização de Permanência), and is still in an illegal situation. That makes it almost impossible for him to defend himself from this situation by legal ways. Besides that, his family who is still in Iraq has been calling him constantly, because they are terrified with the idea that the country will be attacked by the USA. He cannot go back to his country because he asked for asylum, and he cannot bring his family to Portugal because he is not legalised and has no money. He wants to go to Jordan, where he has some contacts that may help him

to take his family from Iraq. He is trying to go by the International Organization for Migrations, who as a program who helps people to return voluntarily to their countries when they cannot pay for the travel. However, it has been difficult, first, because his country is Iraq and not Jordan, and second because there are no direct flights to these countries, and for him to stop in Madrid he needs a letter explaining the situation from the organisations who have been helping him. This has only been necessary since the attacks, and only for the citizens of some muslim countries.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), who helps refugees and immigrants in Portugal, as registered some incidents that have some relation with the events that took place in the USA. Recently, Portugal has become a country with a significant influx of migrants, mainly from countries of the former Soviet Union, but also from Brazil and Pakistan. This organisation helps these migrants to find work, but it as been very difficult to find jobs for Pakistani migrants, for the employers prefers people from other nationalities. Usually the reasons presented are not very clear, but sometimes religion is referred. The situation became worst since the terrorist attacks.

Usually, after some divulgation of the activity of this organization with migrants in the *media*, there are new offers of work. However when there was news about the Pakistani migrants in the eight o'clock news in the television, after the attacks in the USA, there was not a single proposal of work for these Migrants.

Good practices

To our knowledge, no measures explicitly intended to react against a presupposed spur of "Islamophobia" and scapegoating were taken so far. Partly because Portugal still have a small Islamic Community; partly because there were not any integration problems with Muslim, this kind of actions were still not adopted. In fact, this "invisibility" of the Islamic community was recently classified by a researcher as some sort of "exceptionalism" among European countries². Nevertheless, the Islamic Community, trying to clarify the true message of Islam, has conducted several initiatives. In their media interventions all leaders of the Islamic community had took a pedagogic stance. The peaceful message of Islam is underlined so it is the misinterpretation made by some Muslim of the "Alcoran" teachings. The president of the Islamic Centre at O'Porto stated that Muslims there, had not suffered harassment of any kind; instead, people has been most sympathetic and helpful showing "that they know how to dissociate religion from terrorism" (Público, 14/10/2001 – annex 6).

As stated before, criticisms targeted the Government accusing it of passivity. To Sheik Munir it would be of the utmost importance the visiting of some Government member to the Lisbon Mosque, symbolizing, he says, the solidarity between Portuguese authorities and the Muslims living in Portugal. This act should signal that the Islamic Community "was not abandoned in Portugal".

Also, in a chapel in Lisbon was conducted an oration for the peace in the world, regarding the attacks in New York. The service was organized by the Portuguese section of the pacifist movement "Pax Cristi", and had the participation of the Imam of the Lisbon Mosque, Sheik

² See, for instance, Tiesler, Nina Clara "Muslim at the fringes: the new Islamic presence in Portugal" in *Sociologia – Problemas e Práticas*, nº34, 2000, pp. 117-44.

David Munir, that read an Islamic text about peace and invited people to reflect about this subject.

Report on anti-Islamic and anti-Arabic reactions
after the terrorist acts in the USA
19th October – 23rd November 2001

Introduction

Following the first report, this second report also includes specific and factual information concerning the situation of the Muslim community in Portugal after the terrorist attacks in the USA. Again, we tried to focus mainly on the three issues requested, which are the acts of aggression or changes in attitude towards Muslims, good practices for reducing prejudice and reactions by politicians and opinion leaders.

Unfortunately, in our country the information concerning discrimination is not collected and organized by any institution, not even by governmental institutions, like the police. It is also dispersed and usually is collected through an informal way. This makes it difficult to present quantitative data, for most of the information we get is of a highly qualitative character.

We understand the need to present data that may be compared with information collected in other countries. Nevertheless, we don't want to force the situation and "turn people into numbers" when it is obvious we cannot do it without adulterating the information collected. Besides, and probably because of this lack of organization in the gathering of the information, which also includes the lack of information from individuals in relation to the institutional mechanisms they can use to express their problems and points of view, the number of reported cases is not very significant. We contacted many organizations and associations who deal with minorities, but most of them don't have any pertinent information on the subject that interests us.

Therefore, we try to compensate this situation by presenting, whenever possible, direct testimonies from the most varied actors in this process. Most of the times we reduce our commentaries to a minimum, and just present the information as it was given to us. All the written data had to be translated into English. We try to be as faithful as possible in the translations, and some times omit some parts that are not very important for the objectives we propose to achieve.

There are some testimonies that may not be direct expressions of those three issues. But we think that it is not possible to have a correct notion of the intensity and nature of the discriminatory phenomenon without referring to "the other side of the coin". For this reason we find it very important to present, for example, manifestations of support to the Muslim community, and some times even of criticism to the occidental society. We try to present testimonies from all the actors involved, Christians and Muslims, Portuguese citizens and immigrants, governmental organizations and associations, so that the essence of what is going on in Portugal may be caught.

There is some information that seems to be lacking, like the reactions by politicians and mainly by the government. This has to do with the deficit of action from governmental actors in relation to this. Like a member of an anti-discrimination association said, the role of the Portuguese government has been “undefined”.

We start by taking a glance at the minorities in Portugal, especially to the recent immigrants and refugees in our country. We intend to develop this subject in our last report. For now we just want to give an idea of the recent phenomenon of mass migration to our country. Then we focus our attention in the reactions to the terrorist attacks. In here we gather all information, including the good practices for reducing prejudice, for this also constitutes a reaction to the possible consequences of the attacks. We refer mainly to the reactions from Portuguese non-Muslim citizens, from the Portuguese Muslim community and from associations, politicians and opinion leaders.

We also stress what has been going on in the media regarding this subject. We chose not to present and organize the information according to the three items requested, for some of it may have something to do with more than one item. For example, the statement from the Portuguese Muslim association Al Furqan, published in a newspaper, presents their opinion in relation to these events and constitutes a useful instrument for the clarification of some features of the Islamic culture.

The recent minorities in Portugal

Portugal was, until recently, mainly a country of emigration. Most immigrants living in Portugal came from the PALOPs (African Countries of Portuguese language). Some of them, especially those who came from Mozambique and Guinea, are Muslims, and some times already have Portuguese nationality. There were two extraordinary legalization processes in 1992 and 1996, which made it possible for many immigrants to legalize their situation in Portugal by getting a permit to live in our country (Autorização de Residência). The pressure of the recent wave of immigration, mainly from countries of the former Soviet Union, like Ukraine, made it necessary for the government to legislate on the subject. Therefore, new legislation became effective in January, that allows immigrants to get a permit to live in Portugal (Autorização de Permanência) if they present a valid passport and a contract for work recognized by the government. These consist basically in a visa to work, and it is much more restricted in the rights it offers than the Autorização de Residência, which is still being given but only in some very special cases, like for example for humanitarian reasons to people from Sierra Leone. In here we present some data that is useful to understand some of the more specific information about the discrimination against Muslims, especially in relation to the newcomers from Pakistan.

Refugees

The number of asylum seekers in Portugal is almost insignificant, especially comparing with other European countries. For example, in the last 10 years there have been 1.958.200 requests for asylum in Germany, 223.200 in Belgium, 91.500 in Spain and only 4.712 in Portugal.

In relation to the origin of the asylum seekers in Portugal, we may say that they came from the most varied countries. For example, in the year 2000, there were 202 requests for asylum

from 42 different countries, like France (1), Angola (12), Russia (16) or Serra Leone (52). There were also 4 requests from Afghanistan, 3 from Iran, 1 from Iraq and 5 from Pakistan³.

The reduced number of asylum seekers in Portugal can be partially explained by the Portuguese legislation in relation to this matter. It is very difficult to obtain the status of refugee in Portugal. For instance, in the last year, of the 202 requests 140 were denied, and only 16 were accepted.

On the other hand, since the new legislation for immigration became effective, in January were granted 113 390 visas (Autorizações de Permanência), which are valid for 1 year and can be obtained through a contract made within Portugal.

Immigrants

As we have pointed out, since the new legislation became effective, in January, the government gave 113 390 visas (Autorizações de Permanência).

The last statistic by the government (www.acime.pt), presented the data available until September. We can see that most of these immigrants came from Ucraina (33 304), Brazil (17 873) and then Moldavia (6 902). 2 562 immigrants from Pakistan also got the visa.

Reactions to the terrorist attacks in the USA

From Portuguese citizens

Several commentaries from Portuguese citizens in relation to the events in the USA and to its consequences keep appearing in the Internet. As they are an important evidence of the people's opinion, again we chose to present some of them here, which are the ones we consider to be more pertinent. Unlike what happened in the beginning, where some highly racist and discriminatory commentaries were made against Muslims, this time the commentaries made are softer, and express mainly political opinions.

There were only two commentaries that seem to have a more pejorative connotation, for they express persecutory ideas in relation to Muslims, which were made in reaction to news about the murder of Christians in Pakistan:

- "The Islamic want to take over the world, they are more than us and they are well organized. They started by attacking the USA for they are the only ones that can oppose them. We are next".
- "This will be the end of the majority of the Portuguese people, which is Catholic, if we allow these fundamentalist animals to expand and expose their ideas".

There are also some critics to the Muslim communities, based essentially on their political and social performances:

³ These data are presented in CPR (Conselho Português para os Refugiados – Portuguese Council for Refugees) – 10 Years, 2001, Almada

- “It does not look good”... “All the contradictions between the statements of the Muslims in Europe and USA and what is common practice in countries where Muslims are in power, and exercise all kinds of intolerant acts”.
- “I feel abandoned by the Muslim community, I never notice them. I know we gave them land to build a Mosque. I know they live among us, for they are Portuguese citizens, and they are treated like the constitution and the Christian principles determine”... “Why do they require an especial attention from the Portuguese authorities? Have they done some charity work that I missed? What are their social accomplishments that can be enjoyed by all people? What do they give that is more than what is expected of all citizens?”

And there are also some manifestations of support to Muslims, as well as of criticism in relation to the occidental society. For instance:

- “There has to be an effort to protect the Muslim community of our country, that is also theirs. Portugal does not belong to Christians, it belongs to all those who feel Portuguese”.

The Jesuit Refugee Service, which helps refugees and immigrants who live in Portugal, still considers it to be difficult to find work for Pakistani immigrants. Most employers don't want to accept these immigrants. Usually they don't mention the reasons why they don't want to accept them, but some times Muslim religion is presented as a reason, especially since the terror attacks. According to this organization, there seems to be some suspicion in relation to these immigrants, in part because of their religion and country of origin, which is too close to the events.

The responsible for a job agency declared that it is almost impossible to find work for Pakistani immigrants. The employers just refuse to accept them without referring the reasons why, even if they never had any unsuccessful experience with these workers.

A Portuguese association – Solidariedade Imigrante (Immigrant Solidarity), which helps immigrants, had contact with some situations of discrimination. Although this information is not systematised, it is important to present it here as a testimony of possible situations of racism against Muslims.

According to this association:

- a Brazilian Muslim declared that he felt everybody kept looking at him in an unfriendly way after what happened in the US. He decided not to wear his normal Muslim clothes because he feared an aggression.
- Sikh immigrants also complained that people mistake them for Muslims, and some times even throw stones at them.
- a Muslim immigrant from Ghana complained that some time ago, while he was in Martim Moniz (a square in Lisbon where Muslim immigrants often meet), a policeman came to him after a burglary and forced him to show his residence permit. According to him, the policeman called him Taliban and took his documents (Autorização de Residência). He was

then forced to get in the police car and the policemen drove him around Lisbon while threatening him that would destroy his documents. Finally they let him go.

From the Muslim community

Statement by the director of the Muslim magazine Al Furqan, which is presented in Al Furqan's page in the Internet (www.alfurqan.pt):

“The terrorist act of 11th September in the USA cannot be used as an excuse to forget the numerous unfair acts, some of them also of terror, that the USA have perpetrated, and are perpetrating now, or will in the future, directly or by complicity, in the world, and mainly in the Middle East.

All provocation generates a reaction. Therefore, it was natural to expect the American operation. Rational and ideal it would be to find political, diplomatic, social and economical solutions to this phenomenon.

To attack the innocent people of Afghanistan, already a victim of decades of war and oppression, and now suffering the forced dispersion, does not seem to be human, and will not help to solve the main problem, which is terrorism. On the contrary, violence will generate more violence.”

Declaration from the Portuguese Muslim organization Al Furqan⁴, published in a Portuguese newspaper⁵ in 10, 11 and 12th October, in reaction to the attacks in the USA:

“Islam condemns terrorism, for the Koran declares clearly: “Those who cause corruption in Earth will be cursed” (Surat Ar Ra’d, 13:25)”...

...”As Muslims, we strongly condemn these barbaric attacks and we offer our condolences to the American people, bending ourselves with the same greave that we feel for all people in the world who suffer from injustice”... “The Islam is by no way the source of this violence, which as no place in Islam”... “The reality is that even if the terrorists are Muslims, these terrorist actions cannot be classified as “Islamic terror”, in the same way that they would not be called “Jewish terror” if the terrorists were Jewish, or “Catholic terror” if they were Christians”...

... “To murder innocent people in the name of religion is unacceptable”... “Among the victims there were Christians, Jewish and Muslims”... “According to Islam, to murder innocent people is a great sin that, unless pardoned by God, leads to damnation. Therefore, a religious person that fears God can never perform such an act”... “In fact, the aggressors can only have the intention of attacking religion. They perform this actions to present the religion as malefic, to separate people from religion and generate hate against religious people. Therefore, each attack against the American citizens or any other innocent people is in reality an attack against religion”...

... “It’s common for the media to talk about “Islamic fundamentalism” to characterise the violent actions of terrorist groups. This is one more example of the confusion, who knows if premeditated, about the Islam”... “And we say premeditated because it’s very uncommon to ear about the “Jewish fundamentalism”, or the “Christian fundamentalism”, that according to this conception also exists”... “Being the Islam the religion of peace (Islam) achieved by the submission to God, It’s unthinkable that violence may be considered as a characteristic of the Islamic doctrine.

⁴ Independent organization created in 1981

⁵ in Diário de Notícias

(...) “The way of conducting the defensive war in Islam is also subjected to rules and its fundamental limits cannot be overrun (...) Therefore, all Islamic groups that use methods that are forbidden by the Islamic principles place themselves outside Islam and should be called “outsiders of Islam” or something like that, but never “Islamic fundamentalists”...

Then they go on by presenting some suggestions to the occidental world:

... “1: The occidental world, especially the USA, will obviously take dissuasive measures to respond to terror, and they have the right to do it. But it must be clear that this is not a war against Islam and the Muslims, but a way to serve the best interests of peace and of Islam. The “confrontation of civilizations”, the dangerous scenario predicted in the ‘90s, must be avoided by all means”...

... “2: The expansion of the “true Islam” must be achieved”... “The solution for the radical factions in Islamic countries must not be forced secularisation”... “This would be an incentive for mass reactions and would feed fanatics. The solution is the dissemination of the true Islam and of the role-model of a Muslim, which embraces the Koranic values of human rights, democracy, liberty” ... “and offers happiness and glory to human kind”...

Meanwhile, the Portuguese Muslim Community organized a conference about the relation between religions, in which they invited several members from the government and spiritual leaders from all around the world. There was some publicity around it, but it was organized mainly at the institutional level, and not essentially directed to all the people. It had the presence of the Portuguese President that addressed the audience.

In the media and public discourse

The media have been giving some attention to Islam and the Muslim reality since the attacks in the USA. There have been a considerable amount of debates and articles concerning this reality. Most of the debates gather representatives from the Portuguese Muslim community, Muslim immigrants and experts in Muslim matters. Their main goal seems to be to inform people about Islam and its followers.

Nevertheless, the way this information is presented is not free of ambiguous interpretations. For example, an element of the association *Solidariedade Imigrante* called our attention to an interview given by a Muslim immigrant, in which he was expressing his point of view concerning the attacks, and talking about his life and habits. The TV station arranged the interview in a way that while he was talking the scenario behind him was showing the twin towers in flames.

Anyhow, what is free of dubious interpretations is the plain fact that the interest about the Islam has been growing.

A Portuguese weekly newspaper, *Expresso*, dedicated an edition of its magazine (27th October) to Islam. The cover was written in Arabic, and inside there were several extensive articles concerning the Portuguese Muslim community, the Portuguese Muslim history, and some global facts about the Islam. There was an article about Abdool Vakil, an important figure of the national finances and leader of the Portuguese Muslim community, which considers himself as Portuguese, European, Occidental and Muslim.

Then there are some facts about the Portuguese Muslim community (about 35 000 people, most of them from African countries, like Mozambique and Guinea), the Portuguese Mosques (15), where to buy “halal” meat (4 places around Lisbon), where to learn Arabian language (in the Lisbon Mosque or in the Lisbon and Porto Universities), the versions of the Koran in Portuguese language (3 Brazilian and 2 Portuguese) and the Muslim TV programmes (2 programs, 2 and 18 times a year).

Next the newspaper presented some detailed information about Islam, ending with a reference to the Arabic traces in Portugal and to some historic facts related to the Arabic occupation of the national territory. Some historic personalities that were erased from our collective knowledge are referred to, as the poet Al-Mutamide or the philosopher Ibn Assid. In the end the idea of the great cultural loss that represented the departure of the Arabs from our country is stressed.

Another fact that regained interest and was referred to in this and other newspapers was the story of Paulo de Almeida Santos, now Abdullah Yusuf, the Portuguese who converted to Islam and in 1991 tried to kill king Zahir Shah in Rome, which according to these articles was considered by the FBI as the first attack outside Afghanistan by Bin Laden and his organization Al Qaida. He left jail in 1999 for good behaviour and has disappeared. The Interpol believes that he may be in Portugal, and made an appeal for information concerning his whereabouts. No one knows if he is still connected to the Al Qaida.

Two special cases deserve to be mentioned. In a right-wing newspaper named “O Diabo” the former bishop of Bragança (a town at the North of Portugal) – D. António Rafael - urged Portuguese people to not let our population to be substituted by immigrants (O Diabo, October, 16). In effect, as was stressed in the previous report, this newspaper is full of warnings regarding the dangers of increasing immigration and an association that is too neatly done is the one between terrorism and uncontrolled migration.

From associations, politicians and other opinion leaders

The association *Solidariedade Imigrante* had its 3rd encounter dedicated to the immigration phenomenon. It was dedicated to the subject “Asian immigrants complain of discrimination”. There, the immigrants, including Muslims, had the opportunity to present and discuss their problems publicly.

As it was mentioned in our first report, Sheik Munir, the spiritual leader of the Portuguese Muslim community, complained publicly about the lack of interest from the Portuguese government in relation to the Portuguese Muslims. In reaction to this, Dom Januário, a prominent member of the Catholic Church in Portugal, referred that important steps have been given in the gathering of different religions, as it is the wish of the Catholic Church. He declared that people couldn't remain divided because of their difference of perspectives in relation to religion, and that is time to end the fights and the crusades that for such a long time were a common practice of the Catholic Church.

In the 30th of October, a public demonstration against the war in Afghanistan took place in Lisbon. It gathered the support of about 50 organizations, including left wing parties, like the Portuguese Communist Party (Partido Comunista Português) and Bloco de Esquerda, a sindical organization (CGTP), and several personalities (well known musicians). A

representative from the Portuguese Communist Party said that terrorism could be put into an end by ensuring peace in Palestine, and not with more aggressions. A deputy from Bloco de Esquerda, the “leftiest” party represented in the Portuguese Parliament, declared that the “left” has to remain strong and united to prevent the involvement of Portugal in this war. The demonstration was pacific and gathered about 3000 people.

Pacheco Pereira, a deputy of the Portuguese Social-Democrat Party, declared in an interview on television that he had studied Arabian for 3 years in the Lisbon Mosque, and that the Portuguese Muslims are pacific and hard-working people.

Mario Soares, the former president, criticized the USA for attacking the innocent people of Afghanistan and stressed that not all Muslims are terrorist. This took place in a conference in Sagres, Algarve.

Conclusion

As we already pointed out, the main problem we faced in the making of this report was the difficulty to have access to pertinent information. The NGO's and associations that deal with minorities may have some informal knowledge about some specific cases, the governmental institutions that work in this area usually don't have a direct and close access to people, and there is no institutional mechanism that may be used by people to complain and present situations of discrimination. Even the police do not gather information concerning cases of discrimination in a way that allows examination.

One other fact that must be pointed out is that many Muslims living in Portugal are not easily recognized as such, for they wear Occidental clothes and their appearance is the same any other person that came from the PALOPs. This may save them from suffering harassment in the public places. On the other hand, non-Muslim people, as the Sikhs, may be mistaken for Muslims, what has caused situations of harassment and aggression.

Finally, it is fundamental to point out that discrimination can present itself by many different ways, some of them not very easily detected. If there are no big demonstrations of racism, like murders or physical attacks, there can be other ways for a society not to accept some people because of their religion, or for other reasons.

Since this new wave of immigration has started, more or less informal movements were mobilized in order to facilitate the integration of these immigrants. What is curious to point out is the clear preference for immigrants from the former communist block. It is a reality that they are the majority, but there are Portuguese lessons for them from associations, churches or schools, there is help to find work, to rent a house, to get furniture and so on, and when these movements or groups are confronted with the difficult situation of other immigrants, mainly from Pakistan, they often refuse to help them, for these is “outside of their objectives”.

Our objective here is to present facts, and hope that they will be reflected upon. For these reason we will not present our commentaries in relation to these phenomenon and its possible origin. Instead we choose to end these report with a situation that has occurred in the Jesuit Refugee Service in Lisbon. A woman that belongs to an association of friends that help only

immigrants from Russia and Ukraine commented that its very good that this immigrants are coming to our country, for they will help in the purification of our race.

Summary report on anti-Islamic and anti-Arabic reactions
after the terrorist acts in the USA
September – December 2001

Introduction

Four months have passed since the terrorist attacks in the United States, and the situation of the Portuguese Muslim community appears to have returned to normality. The subject seems to have been forgotten, and all the sources of information we have contacted had nothing further to report.

The media slowly stopped giving so much attention to the Muslim community and its problems, and the attention of the Portuguese society was driven to other subjects. We tried to contact some more interesting sources on this subject, and we managed to gather some more information about events that took place right after the attacks, but recently nothing seems to have happened that may call our attention.

According to a representative of the Portuguese Muslim Community, this can partially be explain by the fact that most of the Muslims residing in Portugal, about 95%, are Portuguese and are well integrated into society.

Many of them came to our country in the late seventies from the PALOPS (African Countries of Portuguese Official Language), mainly from Guinea and Mozambique. They've settled down here and their children were born in Portugal. They don't live in ghettos but they are disseminated in the rest of the Portuguese society; they live in the same neighbourhood, go to the same schools, and work in the same companies. One fact that seems to be relevant is that usually they are not even recognised as Muslims, for they wear the same type of clothes and they have the same physical aspect as any Portuguese with origins in the PALOPS.

Even considering the neighbourhood where most discriminatory events took place, a middle class area near Lisbon called Portela, the Muslims residing there live in the same building as all the other residents and share the same infrastructures.

We will now present the information we managed to gather in this final report.

1. Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU population towards ethnic, cultural, religious minorities, especially Muslim/Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups or new types of victims, related to the recent terrorist attacks in the USA

We have some more information on this subject, because we have contacted some new sources. All these events took place right after the terror attacks, and the reason why we did not report them in our former reports is that we did not know about it then. This information was given to us by a representative of the Portuguese Muslim Community.

- The Iman of a mosque near Lisbon was attacked soon after the terror attacks. Someone threw a stone at him as he was walking down the street. In the same neighbourhood some women suffered verbal insults.

- A Muslim woman testified that she suffered verbal abuse in a supermarket from other customers. She was a regular customer, and before nothing like that had ever happened.
- Two cars belonging to Muslims were vandalised (broken windows, scratches). The cars were easily identified as belonging to Muslim owners for they had visible symbols of this religion.

2. Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression

We have nothing to report on this subject, for no actions have been taken recently to reduce prejudice and discrimination.

3. Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders

Also here we have nothing to say, for no public stands have been taken recently on this subject.

Conclusion

After the terrorist attacks in the United States there were some discriminatory acts against the Portuguese Muslim Community. However, these actions seem to be of a more occasional nature, without any kind of relation with organised racist movements.

Meanwhile, the situation seems to have returned to normal, the Muslim subject as dropped out of the media and the public discourse, and it was not even mentioned by anyone in the recent electoral campaign that took place in our country.

Apart from the Pakistani community, that still has not managed to “mingle” into the Portuguese society, the Portuguese Muslim Community continue to live in our country in what seems to be a peaceful and quiet environment.

Therefore, it doesn't seem to be serious motives for alarm, in spite of some initial discriminative actions that may have caused some concern. The Portuguese Muslim community itself doesn't show great signs of concern, considering the testimonies of some of its representatives. The governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations that could have some knowledge on facts related to this problem, like the police or immigrant organisations, had nothing more to report besides what was already mentioned in our reports. For this reasons, we find it possible to consider that the situation is not very distressing in our country.