

EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF
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RELATIONS

Islamophobia, xenophobia and the climate of hate

“It is not immigration that threatens our culture now, but nascent fascism and neo-Nazism, with the violence and intimidation that are associated with those political creeds.”

Daphne Caruana Galizia, Maltese journalist

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Preface

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In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we document around eighty of the most serious incidents of racial violence that have taken place across Europe over the last eleven months. These attacks occurred as the war on terror heightened prejudices against Muslims and foreigners. As Islam has been essentialised (by commentators, politicians and the media) as inherently violent and migration has been depicted as a threat to national security, 'Muslim' has become synonymous with 'terrorist', and migrant and foreigner with 'crime'. The end result, not surprisingly, is increased Islamophobia and xenophobia.

The cases of racist violence documented in Section 1 suggest that a large proportion of Europe's hate crimes are actively instigated by extreme-Right organisations and that such extremist movements are flourishing in the war on terror-induced climate of suspicion and hysteria. While governments regularly call on Muslim organisations to do more to combat Islamic terrorism, they appear to do far less to counter the racist terrorism of white nationalists. 'It is not immigration that threatens our culture now, but nascent fascism and neo-Nazism, with the violence and intimidation that are associated with those political creeds', warned Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, herself targeted by racists.

The case studies documented in Section 2 show that racist and neo-Nazi movements feed off the more populist and mainstreamed strains of Islamophobia and xenophobia, including those of political parties. Parties such as the Vlaams Belang, the Danish People's Party and the Northern League must take some of the blame for the increase in intolerance and hate. For they and their supporters continually posit Islam as a threat to democracy, as incompatible with constitutions, national identity, customs and values. Thus, the very presence of a mosque in a community can be deemed threatening, as can be something as innocuous as the donning of religious clothing. In this report, we document numerous cases of populist campaigns against mosques, Muslim meeting places and even burial places in Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Spain and Switzerland.

Finally, in Section 3, we document the corrosive effect of the war on terror on democratic standards, civil rights and criminal justice. Increased racism and intolerance are inevitable by-products of the introduction of racial and religious profiling in policing and intelligence services and the public climate of fear against Muslims and migrants.

Liz Fekete

Editor, European Race Bulletin

Racial violence

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This compilation is drawn, for the most part, directly from the news sources cited. But in some cases the sources were gleaned from the web pages of other organisations monitoring the European press. The following websites have proved invaluable: Amadeu Antonio Foundation in collaboration with the journal *Stern* (www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de); the European Network Against Racism (www.enar-eu.org/en/wmail/index.shtml); The Internet Centre Against Racism in Europe (www.icare.to); *UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines* (www.unhcr.se); *ROMEIA* (www.romeia.cz).

AUSTRIA

Vienna: attempt to bomb Muslim youth group foiled

On September 11, bomb disposal experts destroyed an explosive package containing gas cartridges and cables, which was found outside the offices of the Austrian Muslim Youth (MJO), an organisation that aims to help young Muslims integrate into society. A neo-Nazi slogan found on the package read 'July 4 1926, Weimar', an apparent reference to a key meeting that allowed Hitler to increase his control over the Nazi party. The police are following up the neo-Nazi lead but also say that this does not exclude them investigating whether the attack was linked to the xenophobic nature of the election campaign of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) ahead of October's parliamentary elections.

Racist violence rises

The attack has drawn attention to increasing neo-Nazi activity and extremist violence. Last April, arsonists attacked a Muslim cemetery in a Vienna suburb. A bomb also exploded near a mosque in Vienna in November 2005. In September 2005, unknown attackers hurled stones at worshippers during their dawn prayers in a mosque in Linz. (*Islam Online* 14.9.06)

BELGIUM

Government and civil society considers roots of racist violence

After Hans van Themsche, a young racist related to a member of the far-Right Vlaams Belang (VB), killed a Malian au pair and the 2-year-old Belgian child in her care and seriously injured a woman of Turkish origin in May this year (see *European Race Bulletin* 56), debates about the persistence of racial violence in Belgium have featured prominently in the media. Although commentators in the Belgian media initially – and mistakenly – blamed Moroccan youths for the earlier murder of Joe van Holsbeeck, a white teenager, in Brussels in April 2006, Belgium is slowly beginning to accept that racist violence is a Belgian problem, and not one imported from the countries of settled immigrant communities. Prime minister Guy Verhofstadt has spoken of Belgian society descending into a 'spiral of violence' and many people blame the situation on the hatred and xenophobia being propagated by the Front National in Wallonia and the VB in the city of Antwerp. (Radio France Internationale website 12.5.06)

Appeasement of far-Right parties blamed for hate climate

Yet, despite the demonstrated links between the racist murderer Hans van Themsche and the VB, representatives of other parties still appear to be appeasing the VB's racist views. Some politicians have openly rejected the idea of a 'cordon sanitaire' between more mainstream parties and the VB and have shown interest in forming alliances with them. A case in point is Marc Demesmaeker, a politician in the Flanders separatist New-Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, or N-VA), who told a newspaper that he thought his party should hold discussions with the VB after the October 2006 municipal elections. He also suggested that his party 'shares some of the same nationalist ideas' as the VB and that the VB is an ideal choice when compared with other parties such as the Union of Francophones (UF) and Democratic Front of the Francophones (FDF), who are the 'real fascists and racists'. (*La Libre Belgique* 14.6.06)

CECLR annual report warns of 'entrenched racism'

In its annual report on racism in 2005, the Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (CECLR) warned that racism had become firmly entrenched in daily life in Belgian society and that the situation required greater attention in terms of legal action in accordance with the 1981 anti-racism law. Reported cases of racism are, according to the report, just the 'tip of the iceberg' and the 'hidden face of racism' still needs to be confronted. April and May 2006 were particularly shocking for the number of racist attacks and murders in Belgium. (CECLR, *Rapport annuel 2005*, 05.06)

Tienen: Roma stabbed in skinhead assault

Immediate surgery has saved the life of Peter Danyi, an 18-year-old Roma, who was assaulted alongside his friend in Tienen (Flemish Brabant province) by five skinheads who knocked him to the ground before repeatedly stabbing him. Five men, including two minors have been arrested, and the youth who carried out the stabbing has admitted that it was racially motivated. The organisation Opra Roma condemned this racist attack and organised a demonstration against racism and for tolerance. (*ROMEIA* 30.8.06, *NRT Flandersnews.be* 2.9.06)

Other recent cases to cause alarm

Other cases of racial violence reported in the media in 2006 include:

- At the end of April, a 26-year-old Congolese man was beaten outside a petrol station in Zellik, leaving him partially blind and paralysed. (*La Libre Belgique* 12.5.06, *World Socialist Web Site* 21.6.06)
- Mohamed Bouazza, a 23-year-old Belgian man of

Moroccan origin, was found dead in the River Scheldt. His mother blamed the climate of racism that had developed in Belgium on the VB. The young man was found dead on 10 May following his disappearance after an argument outside a nightclub on 30 April. His family allege that his death was the result of a racist attack. (*La Libre Belgique* 26, 27.5.06, Bladi.net 13.5.06)

- On 2 May, arsonists attacked the home of a Moroccan family in Heule (Courtrai). (*La Libre Belgique* 12.5.06)

- On 6 May, skinheads in Bruges attacked two people, one of whom – Raphaël Mensah, who is French and of Gabonese origin – was beaten into a coma near the De Kastelein pub, which is frequented by far-Right activists. Five suspects were arrested by the police, with two later being released, though still accused of failing to help the victims. (*La Libre Belgique* 12.5.06, *l'Humanité* 15.5.06, *Alert!* 7.7.06)

Civil action launched against racist killer

The Belgian Human Rights League has decided to take legal action against Hans van Themsche, who went on a shooting spree in Antwerp on 11 May. In a press statement, the organisation stated: 'We are to take civil action due to the racist nature of these murders and the emotion caused among a large part of the population. These racist murders can lead to a feeling of fear, insecurity and intolerance.' (*La Libre Belgique* 16.6.06)

Anti-racism march draws attention to Antwerp's 'climate of hate'

On 26 May, around 18,000 people marched through Antwerp in solidarity with the families of the victims of Hans van Themsche and other attackers. The cousin of the Malian au pair killed earlier in the month gave a speech condemning racism in Antwerp: 'The people of Antwerp are always warmly welcomed in Africa. Why is it not the same for Africans in Antwerp?' Georges Kamanayo, who helped organise the march, said: 'The murderer was driven by the climate of racism that continues to rise in this town.' (*La Libre Belgique* 27.5.06)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague: neo-Nazis blamed for attacks in Prague district

At the end of 2005, business owners in the Zizkov district (Prague 3) drew attention to an increased presence of neo-Nazis whom they linked to a spate of incidents in which bars were vandalised and several people attacked, on days when skinheads were holding organised rallies. The organisation Tolerance and Civil Society (TOS) stated that the victims of such attack were usually Roma, homeless people and immigrants.

Bar attacked

In one incident on 28 October 2005, eight skinheads stormed the Blind Eye bar in Zizkov. The owner, described as 'part-Jewish', said that the incident was terrifying and 'reminiscent of Kristallnacht'. On November 5, a similar incident was reported at the nearby bar Beelzepub. On November 13, two men were

attacked outside a gay bar. (*Prague Post* 14.12.05)

Neratovice: extremists arrested after anti-Roma attack

In May 2006, three members of the neo-Nazi National Resistance were arrested after they broke into a block of flats in Neratovice, banging on the doors of Romani tenants, chanting racist abuse and threatening to kill them. Police claimed that the incident was an exception. But the local court in Melnik has been dealing with a three-year-old case in which young people had attacked Roma. (*ROMEIA* 17.5.06).

Ceske Budejovice: mystery assailant shoots at Roma

In July, it was reported that police had been unable to find someone who, for four weeks, had been shooting at people in Ceske Budejovice's largest housing estate and who was responsible for the wounding of four people, including two children, all of whom were of Romani origin. (*ROMEIA* 28.7.06)

Brno: police officers prosecuted for tormenting Roma

In July, two policemen from Brno, south Moravia, were accused of abuse of public office and other offences after they detained a young Romani man, whom one of the police officers suspected of having attacked and robbed his son and other children. Instead of taking the suspect to the police station, the policemen drove him to the outskirts of town where they allegedly beat him up. They also, reportedly, put an unloaded gun into his mouth, while pulling the trigger. (*ROMEIA* 7.7.06)

DENMARK

Intelligence service records more racist crimes

Racist violence in Denmark has risen in recent years according to official statistics. The Danish intelligence service recorded eighty-one racist attacks in 2005, as compared with fifty-three in 2003. (*European Jewish Press* 19.6.06)

Northern Jutland: intimidation tactics against immigrants and refugees

Police in Northern Jutland reported that a series of threatening letters were sent to around 100 immigrants and refugees over a period of several months, particularly in the city of Aalborg. The letters reportedly contained 'humiliating racist comments' and pictures of Adolf Hitler. A group calling itself 'a circle of national-socialists from North Jutland' warned recipients to leave Denmark before a 'war on bastards' began. Jonni Hansen, leader of the Danish National Socialist Party (DNSB), denied his party was responsible for the letters, but supported them: 'If it is a letter urging people to leave the country, I can't see anything wrong with that. It isn't illegal to send random people letters. Of course, you aren't allowed to threaten them but you are allowed to make a suggestion. Encouraging immigrants to go home is a good and necessary thing.' (*Copenhagen Post* 19.6.06, *European Jewish Press* 19.6.06)

Muslim cemetery attacked even before it opens

Denmark's first Muslim cemetery, in Brøndby (Copenhagen), was attacked several times even before it was opened. Swastikas were painted at the cemetery plot and similar vandalism has taken place at an Islamic centre in Copenhagen. (*Copenhagen Post* 24.7.06)

FINLAND

Roma most frequently subjected to racist assaults

According to a report by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, the most common victims of racially-motivated assaults are 'visible minorities', of which Roma constitute the largest group. The next largest groups are Somalis, Russians, Turks, Iraqis and Iranians. Research by the Finnish Police College revealed that in 2005, over 550 crimes came to the police's attention. (European Roma Rights Centre, News Roundup 2.2.06)

Refugee hostel attacked in Kotka

Twenty young men attacked a building in the south coast city of Kotka housing forty Myanmar refugees who arrived in Finland in April 2006 as part of the country's annual refugee quota. Minister of Labour Tarja Filatov condemned the attack. Local police said the racist attack occurred after the gang of Finnish youth went looking for revenge after a Finnish resident was attacked by a foreign man in Aatteenkatu in Kotka's Suulisniemi district. (*Helsingin Sanomat* 29.8.06)

FRANCE

Courts deny racial motive following death of Algerian man

A journalist for the *Nouvel Observateur* believes that he has found fresh evidence to suggest the murder of Chaïb Zéhaf, a 42-year-old father of Algerian origin, who was killed by a gunshot to the head as he left a bar on 4 March 2006 in Oullins, in the suburbs of Lyons (Rhône), was racially motivated. And after a reconstruction of the murder on 23 May, the solicitor representing the victim's family said that he had no doubt that it was an 'ultra-violent murder and the issue of racism will obviously be brought up at the trial'.

The killing of Chaïb Zéhaf

Chaïb Zéhaf, his cousin and a third man had been watching a football match at a bar. An eyewitness states that a man was brandishing a handgun and shouting 'dirty Arabs, race of shit'. Zéhaf jumped on the man with the gun and fell to the ground with him, before two shots were fired, one of which was to the head. Despite this, the state prosecutor in Lyons, Xavier Richaud, initially ruled out a racist motive. Following the killing, a suspect was arrested at the scene of the crime in possession of an automatic pistol. Two other men were later arrested. They may face trial for 'failure to render assistance' to the deceased.

New evidence

According to journalist Robert Marmoz, arms, explosives and a case with a swastika have been found in the flat of Jean Marie G., the suspected murderer. According to the victim's family and solicitor, the discovery adds weight to the possibility that the murder was racist. (noubelobs.com 6, 8, 18.3.06, *Libération* 27.3.06, *Le Monde* 24.5.06)

Paris: police deny racial motive after killing of North African youth

The police have ruled out a racist motive for the killing of a 26-year-old man of North African origin who was stabbed to death on the banks of the River Seine during a violent confrontation between two groups in central Paris. It seems, however, that the suspect for the killing is a member of the far-Right *Unité Radicale* group. (*Libération* 20.6.06)

Lyons: mosque and North Africans targeted

For the third time, the mosque in Lyons has been defaced. The attack occurred on 24 March 2006. In one of the previous attacks, the mosque was firebombed. (*L'Humanité* 27.3.06)

Five men have been arrested, one of whom had a Front National youth wing sticker in his pocket, after over a dozen skinheads attacked two brothers of North African origin with beer bottles at the Gerland stadium in Lyons. One of the attackers said 'You're too white' and the other said 'You're not white enough' as they launched the attack. (*Libération* 24.3.06)

Yonne: arrests in racially-motivated arson investigations

In incidents between May 2004 and March 2005, there were a series of fires at kebab restaurants in Briennon-sur-Armançon and Auxerre (Yonne). In March 2006, it was reported that of eight young adults placed under investigation in connection with the attacks, seven had been convicted, while the eighth – allegedly a far-Right sympathiser – was under investigation for 'criminal conspiracy'. (*La Tribune* 22.3.06)

Oise: rifle shots fired at black people

On 18 June, a man was arrested after firing shots at five black people, injuring two of them, in Compiègne, Oise. The suspect is alleged to have justified the attacks on the grounds of 'resentment against foreigners'. (*Libération* 20.6.06)

Haut-Rhin: mayor convicted after ordering burning of Roma encampment

In May, the UMP mayor of Ensisheim (Haut-Rhin), Michel Habig, received a fine and a six-month prison sentence for having had a Roma encampment in the town set alight in January 2006. In his opinion, the 'squatters' were 'foreigners, some of whom were in an irregular situation' and 'not travellers'. (*Libération* 16, 17.1.06)

Debate over anti-Semitism

There has been a growing debate about anti-Semitic violence in France, triggered in part by high profile cases such as the conviction of comedian Dieudonné M-Bala for inciting racial hatred for comparing Jews to slave

traders, and the incidents on the Rue des Rosiers (see section on 'National Security, anti-terrorist measures and civil rights'). Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy displayed his support for the victims of anti-Semitic violence in Sarcelles by inviting families to see him in a televised display of solidarity.

Attacks and abuse in Sarcelles

After the murder of the Jewish telephone salesman, Ilan Halimi (see *European Race Bulletin* 56), there were three attacks in twenty-four hours on young Jewish men in Sarcelles. A rabbi's son had his nose broken and two men wearing skull caps were reportedly called 'dirty Jews'. The Jewish community in Sarcelles is made up of second-generation North African Jews. (*Guardian* 21.3.06)

Statistics on racial violence

In March, the justice minister announced that convictions for racist and anti-Semitic crimes were up by 43 per cent. However, in January 2006, police statistics showed that the number of racist and anti-Semitic incidents in France had dropped by more than one-third in 2005 as compared to 2004. (*Guardian* 21.3.06, www.eipress.org/article/5342)

GERMANY

Reports of racist and far-Right crimes, particularly in the East, increase

There has been a marked increase in the reporting of racist crime and violence in Germany, particularly in eastern areas. Right-wing extremist groups have been implicated in many attacks, with the number of members of neo-Nazi groups reportedly rising from 3,800 to 4,100. (*Deutsche Welle* 6.6.06) Organised violence has taken root in many areas. In addition to youngsters, families, hostels, cafés, restaurants and community centres being on the receiving end, attacks are increasingly being carried out on left-wing targets and those associated with an 'alternative' lifestyle. Much of the violence is blamed on the right-wing, particularly the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), which is described by *Spiegel Online* as 'out of control'. Fears of the NPD's growing influence were confirmed on 17 September, when the neo-Nazis won 7.3 per cent of the vote in the north-east state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which translates into six seats in the 71-seat parliament. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 16.2.06, *Junge Welt* 20.2.06, *Guardian* 18.9.06)

Official statistics – serious under-recording

Official statistics suggest that violence by German far-Right extremists has risen by 23 per cent between 2004 and 2005 (from 776 to 958 incidents), with the overall figure for crimes with an extreme right-wing motivation rising by 27 per cent (from 12,051 to 15,361). (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 19.4.06, *Jungle World* 17.5.06) But according to the Amadeu Antonio Foundation and the newspaper magazine *Stern* (which have created a new website on racial violence), the official federal statistics represent a massive under-representation of the

problem, and also demonstrate that racial violence is a West German as well as an East German problem. No state was spared right-wing criminal acts in 2005.

Racial violence in East Germany

A report by the Office for the Defence of the Constitution, which was published on 14 June, revealed that in Saxony-Anhalt there was the greatest danger of being attacked by right-wing thugs. Levels of violence in this state were above those of Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony, and ten times higher than in the state of Hesse. One thousand and one hundred crimes were committed by right-wing extremists in 2005, up from 741 in 2004. Right-wing violence increased by over 50 per cent, from 71 to 107 acts. Holger Hövelmann, interior minister of Saxony-Anhalt, has warned of the dangers of right-wing extremism, but also pointed out that more people were reporting crime in his state, showing that they were 'sensitised' on the issue. (*Jungle World* 21.6.06)

At the same time as official statistics were released, East German advice centres for victims published alternative statistics, suggesting that the true number of attacks was considerably higher. According to advice centres of the victims in the new German states (former GDR), they were informed of a total of 614 right-wing criminal acts (official statistics suggested a number of 588 criminal offences nationwide). Most cases were reported to the counselling centres for victims in Saxony (154), followed by Saxony-Anhalt (129) and Brandenburg (128). About 90 per cent of reported cases involved physical injury. In 300 cases, violence was directed at young people from left-wing or alternative backgrounds. In 182 cases, racism was presumed to be the prime motivation for criminal acts. The sheer number of attacks has meant that, in eastern Germany, monitoring groups such as Victims' Perspective have been unable to follow up all of the cases reported to them. More than 135 racist murders have now been recorded since German reunification. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 28.4.06, *ENAR Shadow Report 2005: Racism in Germany*, 2006, Amadeu Antonio Foundation website, April 2006)

In an attempt to explain these developments, *Spiegel Online* writes that in 'entire neighbourhoods of Berlin and in a number of regions in the states of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, right-wingers – particularly the right-wing NPD – have been able to develop a stable infrastructure of support ... The nationalist party has quietly but consistently made itself indispensable to reunification's victims – to welfare recipients and even to the frustrated middle class. Neighbourhood groups, cultural clubs and information centres have been set up – and are used to inject constant doses of right-wing propaganda into the minds of the populace.' *Spiegel Online* states that, according to political scientist Dierk Bostel, 'In doing so, they have filled a vacuum left by mainstream political parties and churches, both of which have been slow to reach out to former East Germans.' (*Spiegel Online* 30.5.06)

Debate surrounding 'no-go' areas at the World Cup

In the weeks leading up to the June 2006 football World Cup, which was held in Germany, a controversial debate arose around the idea that there were 'no-go' areas for black visitors to eastern Germany. Uwe-Karsten Heye, an

anti-racist campaigner and former government spokesman, told a radio programme that: 'There are small and mid-sized towns in Brandenburg and elsewhere where I would advise anyone with a different skin colour not to go. They might not make it out alive.' His comments were criticised by some politicians and in some newspapers for making a generalisation about eastern Germany and allegedly allowing right-wing extremists to seize the opportunity to spread their hatred. (*Deutsche Welle* 18.5.06)

Others, however, supported Heye's comments: Amnesty International (AI) said he had drawn attention to a 'serious problem' and Yonas Endrias of Germany's African Council said: 'There is also racism in western Germany, but as a black person, the chances of being attacked in an eastern German village are much higher.' (*Spiegel* 18.5.06, *Deutsche Welle* 6.6.06)

Nigerian government delegation cancels visit

Already, in April, a Nigerian government delegation cancelled its plans to stay in a hotel in Potsdam for fear of racist attacks. The explanation it gave was the attack on Ermyas M a few days earlier (see below). (*Deutsche Welle* 21.4.06)

Criticism of interior minister for downplaying racist attack

Following the brutal attack on the Ethiopian Ermyas M, during which he received life-threatening injuries (see below), in the notorious area of Cottbus (Brandenburg), some commentators, including the interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble, and Brandenburg's interior minister Jörg Schönbohm, questioned whether the Ethiopian man was singled out for attack due to the colour of his skin. Both politicians also implied that the Federal Public Prosecutor, Kay Neym, who had taken over the investigation from the regional investigating authorities and had spoken of the serious nature of the attack, was giving Brandenburg a bad name.

Of particular concern were the comments of the interior minister who ignited a row when he warned people not to conclude that it was a racist attack and claimed that: 'Blond, blue-eyed people are also the victims of attacks, sometimes by attackers who might not even have German citizenship ... That's not any better.' Claudia Roth, leader of the opposition Green party, criticised Schäuble's comments, saying: 'To relativize such a racist attack by comparing it with attacks on "blond, blue-eyed people" is both cynical and abhorrent.' Björn Böhning, leader of the Social Democratic Party's youth wing, said Schäuble was 'pouring water on the mills of far-Right extremists' and called for him to be disciplined by Chancellor Angela Merkel. Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking through a spokesperson, described the attack on Ermyas M as 'horrible, brutal and displaying contempt for human beings'. (*BBC News* 21.4.06, *Deutsche Welle* 18, 20, 25.4, 23.5.06, *Expatica News* 24.4.06, *Statewatch* March-April 2006)

Documentation of racist street violence

Asylum seekers and refugees are the targets for brutal, mainly neo-Nazi inspired street violence, as are migrants, particularly black Africans and foreign nationals. Some of the most brutal attacks, as well as respons-

es from local and national politicians and the observations of victim support groups, are documented below.

Saxony-Anhalt

In Saxony-Anhalt, according to the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, counselling centres for victims of right-wing violence reported an increase in violent acts in the Harz area. On average, two violent acts were reported each month.

In the early hours of New Year's Day 2006, a gang of neo-Nazi teenagers attacked two Vietnamese nationals in the eastern German town of Graefenhainichen (Saxony-Anhalt). The group used wooden clubs and beer bottles to attack the two after marching through the town shouting neo-Nazi slogans. Police later searched the homes of the extremists, finding gunpowder, chemicals and illegal ammunition for submachine guns. (*Expatica News* 2.1.06)

In the village of Pömmelte, near Magdeburg, a group of youths subjected a 12-year-old boy, whose mother is German and father Ethiopian, to torture for over an hour. In the attack on 9 January 2006, the group of four, aged between 16 and 20, beat the boy, urinated on him, burned his face with cigarettes and forced him at gunpoint to lick their boots. The boy suffered thirty-four injuries, including concussion and a broken nose, and still has nightmares and psychological trauma. He was forced to answer questions with the words 'Yes, my führer!' and the attack was filmed by the group. The boy had apparently been beaten up by the gang a year before, but his family had been too afraid to report it to the police.

The case, which led to jail sentences against four of the accused, prompted a debate within the government of Saxony-Anhalt. The state government, the CDU, SPD, FDP and Left Party were unanimous in their decision to take a stand against right-wing extremism and not to allow it to create dissension among the parties in their campaigns for state elections on 26 March. (*Jungle World* 18.1.06, *Deutsche Welle* 23.5.06, *Independent* 23.5.06)

In early February, there were three separate attacks on Chinese students in Köthen. One of the victims said his attackers were dressed in black and had shaven heads. (*Junge Welt* 17.2.06)

Brandenburg

Although the victims' counselling centre of Brandenburg reported a decrease in racist attacks, there has been a significant increase in violent acts against young people from left and alternative groups.

On 18 March in Cottbus (Brandenburg), a 28-year-old Macedonian man was hospitalised with serious injuries after being harassed and attacked by a group of around ten men. Around fifteen minutes later, in the same town, seven Spanish students were attacked and hit in the face by unknown people. (*Jungle World* 29.3.06)

On 16 April, Ermyas M, a 37-year-old German citizen of Ethiopian origin, was hospitalised with life-threatening head injuries after being beaten into a coma in Potsdam (Brandenburg). During a telephone message left on his wife's mobile phone as he was being attacked, the victim's attackers apparently called him a

'dirty nigger', before inflicting serious injuries to his skull, ribs and one of his eyes. Two men were later arrested on suspicion of racially motivated attempted murder. Prosecutors claimed that the attack was carried out 'on the basis of right-wing extremist attitudes' with claims that at least one of the alleged attackers had demonstrable links to right-wing extremists. (*Statewatch* March-April 2006, *BBC News* 21.4.06, *Deutsche Welle* 18, 20, 25.4.06, 23.5.06, *Expatica News* 24.4.06)

Berlin

Victims' support groups state that there has been a significant increase in right-wing violent attacks in Berlin, as compared to 2004. The counselling centres of Berlin explain that this is due to the increase in attacks in the quarters Treptow-Köpenick and Friedrichshain.

Four right-wing extremists, aged between 15 and 23, were arrested after a 15-year-old boy of Ethiopian origin was attacked in Schönefeld, near Berlin, on 17 June. The group attacked a group of ten people, threw a stone at the teenager's head, called him a 'shitty nigger' and shouted 'Germany for Germans – foreigners out!'. Two of the attackers, Dennis Reinhard E and Timo Detlef L, had also been part of a (thwarted) attack, the previous day, by around thirty neo-Nazis on a meeting about right-wing extremism in Brandenburg. (*Junge Welt* 20.6.06)

Bavaria

On the night of 4 April, four neo-Nazi teenagers insulted and attacked an Iraqi asylum seeker at a railway station in Cham (Bavaria), leading to his hospitalisation for injuries to the face. Three people were arrested after the incident. The neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) has reportedly intensified its activity in the area, recently buying a large property in Cham to hold training events and party conferences. (*Junge Welt* 12.4.06, 17.5.06)

In Munich, an 18-year-old man from Congo was attacked and suffered severe head injuries after a woman attacked him by throwing beer bottles at him, while shouting 'piss off you dirty nigger'. (*Statewatch* March-April 2006)

Series of racist attacks in East Germany around Ascension Day

Ascension Day, a festival and holiday, was associated with a series of racist attacks in the East. On 25 and 26 May, there were four separate attacks on groups of foreigners, injuring six people: in the East German city of Weimar (Thuringia), two Mozambicans and a Cuban having a barbecue were injured after their party was attacked by fifteen young thugs, leading to eight arrests. Meanwhile, five people were arrested after an Indian trader was beaten to the ground by neo-Nazis at a flea market in Wismar, where the assailants apparently used racist language. A Guinean and a Turkish man were injured in separate attacks on the Berlin underground, leading to several arrests. (*BBC News* 26.5.06, *La Libre Belgique* 26.5.06)

Debate on countering racism, particularly amongst young people

With the climate of violence and xenophobia, especially

in eastern Germany, worsening, government initiatives to educate young people has been higher up on the agenda. The government focus is on countering the extremism of both Left and Right. Meanwhile, specific initiatives have also emerged to deal with anti-Semitic ideas amongst immigrant youth.

Government focus on extremism

After voicing concern that young people were being negatively influenced by a virulent extremist right-wing scene, Chancellor Angela Merkel promised more assistance to victims and initiatives to prevent xenophobia and violence, particularly support for the Civitas and Entimon programmes of the ministry for the family. The Social Democrats (SPD), however, criticised the government's desire to fight left-wing extremism in the same way as Right. Cornelia Sonntag-Wolgast (SPD) said: 'Right-wing extremism extends much further, into the midst of society, and therefore requires stronger prevention.' (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 20.4.06)

Nationwide educational campaign targets schools

In response to the activities of right-wing extremists who have been targeting schools, the interior ministers of the German Länder (states) have launched a nationwide campaign, including a media pack entitled 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing' which is being sent to secondary schools across the country. This is partly in response to increasingly organised right-wing networks which distributed a 'schoolyard CD' across Germany in 2004 and to the fact that the NPD is becoming more and more aggressive in its attempts to recruit teenagers. Members accompany them to party seminars after school, accompany them to the unemployment office or play soccer with them. Erwin Hetger, Baden Württemberg's chief of police, has warned that there are now as many as 4,000 hardcore extremists in the country: 'Right-wing extremism is on the up and up at the moment. The degree of organisation is growing and the structures are becoming more professional.' (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.2.06, *Spiegel Online* 30.5.06)

Young mediators' scheme launched to counter anti-Semitism

Increasingly, teachers have watched anti-Semitic attitudes develop among immigrant children with backgrounds in the Middle East. To counter this tendency, youth leaders are being trained to act as conflict-resolution mediators as part of the nationwide 'Youth Leader' project, which had its origins in five schools around Berlin and Potsdam. A small group of students are being given two years of training so that they can share their knowledge about anti-Semitism with their peers. This Anglo-American concept is based on a belief that young people have more credibility with their peers than teachers or other adults. (*Deutsche Welle* 3.6.06)

Research highlights xenophobia of young people

Recent research conducted by scientists from Berlin's Technical University at schools in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf found worrying levels of racism and homophobia among teenage schoolchildren. 3.6 per cent of the pupils surveyed were found to have 'manifestly racist views', while 10.3 per cent had xenophobic attitudes with a 'somewhat weaker degree of

conviction'. 15 per cent said they couldn't be friends with Jews, 13 per cent excluded the possibility of friendship with Arabs and 4 per cent with Black people. (*Jungle World* 26.10.05)

IRELAND

Hate crimes: lack of action must be addressed

The UN Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racism has criticised Ireland for its failure to introduce laws to deal with hate crime. (*Irish Independent* 10.12.05)

Dublin: serious gang assault as Loyalists march

Khosbayar Ganbold, a Mongolian man, was brutally beaten on the head with a glass bottle in an attack on 25 February with a suspected racial motive. Ganbold, was working in an off licence when a customer left the shop without paying. He went after him only to find he had been lured into a trap. A gang of ten men surrounded him and assaulted him. Two of Mr. Ganbold's fellow workers, who were Chinese, then raced to his aid. The gang showered the three men with blows and thrashed them with glass bottles and a metal chair. Khosbayar Ganbold said that if it was not for the brave intervention of his Chinese friends, he would probably be dead.

At the time of the attack, a Loyalist march was set to take place through the city centre. There had been disturbances in the city that day, and his attackers could have been linked to the rioters. (*Irish Independent* 1.3.06)

Dublin: takeaway delivery drivers subjected to racism

Gardaí investigated other attacks in Dublin over the Christmas period where foreign takeaway delivery men were called out to false addresses and subjected to vicious racist beatings. Labour councillor Aodham O'Riordain said racism, and not profit, was the chief motive for the attacks. She called on local communities to bring an end to the sickening assaults on foreign workers. (*Irish Independent* 5.1.06)

Co Laois: stabbing of Polish worker racist

Gardaí investigating a stabbing in Castlecomer in March 2006 which left a 21-year-old Polish man in a critical condition said the only reason for the attack was blatant racism. The young Polish man had been celebrating his 21st birthday with two friends, when they were set upon by a group of locals, shouting racist abuse. The victim was stabbed in the neck; another Polish youth received stab wounds in the arm. (*Laois Nationalist* 16.3.06)

Co. Waterford: African family forced out

An African family were forced to leave their home in Lisduggan, Co. Waterford, a week after they moved in, after a hate campaign. (Police said they could not find evidence to back up claims that the attacks were racially motivated, but were still investigating.) (*Waterford News & Star* 7.7.06, (www.people.co.uk 16.7.06)

County Mayo: foreign families targeted

During the Summer there have been repeated attacks on the homes of Philippine and Nigerian families in the north Mayo town of Ballina. Cllr Michelle Mulherin and others are disturbed that xenophobia has come to what was in the past a friendly town and point out the benefit that hard working immigrants have brought to the area. (*Mayo News* 9.8.06)

ITALY

South Tyrol: Nazis instigate racial hatred

In December 2005, eight naziskins were arrested in the South-Tyrol, German-speaking region of Italy and charged with offences of instigating racial hatred. A further 41 naziskins were placed under investigation. The nazis were said to be members of the Südtiroler Kameradschaftsring (Skr), a pan-Germanic far-Right group which targets Jews, immigrants and local Italians (also viewed as invading immigrants). Almost all those arrested are small businesspeople and local teachers from Caldaro, a small town to the south of Bolzano. (*il manifesto* 24.12.05)

Rome: More far-Right incidents

Fiamma Tricolore are active in Rome, prompting violence on the streets, claims a bookseller whose bookshop, 'Ke Baruffe', was targeted in February 2006 by local fascists, who daubed its walls with the slogan 'Jewish shop, vermin, we'll burn you all'. Previously, the La Torre left-wing social centre was attacked, and the walls of a nearby school were daubed with racist and anti-Semitic slogans. (*il manifesto* 24, 26.2.06)

Racist incidents in Milan

For the first time, a cemetery in Milan was desecrated, with around 40 Jewish tombs defaced and smashed. Although no anti-Semitic slogans or swastikas were discovered, the Jewish area is part of a much larger cemetery and only Jewish tombs were attacked. (*il manifesto* 19.5.06)

Pap Khouma, a well-known Senegalese writer, was hospitalised after being assaulted by ticket controllers on the Milan transport system (ATM) who alleged he was not in possession of a valid ticket. He was, in fact, in possession of a season ticket. (*il manifesto* 25.6.06)

More racist attacks

In January 2006, up to ten people attacked an Ecuadorian couple in Busto Arsizio, Varese. Before physically assaulting them, the gang racially abused them and hurled bottles at them from a balcony. Four people were arrested. (*il manifesto* 3.1.06)

In April, a young non-EU citizen was brutally assaulted by a gang of skinheads who attacked him with sticks and bottles. The victim was taken to hospital but discharged himself. It is presumed that he was undocumented, and did not want to risk deportation. (*il manifesto* 11.4.06)

Contradictory rulings on use of racist language

In March, the Supreme Court finally ruled that to call someone a 'sporco negro' ('dirty nigger') constitutes racism. In this case, a 60-year-old man had told a six-year-old girl, 'go out of here, you dirty nigger'. However, deliberating on a case arising from an argument between an employer and employee the Supreme Court had earlier ruled that to call a person a 'negro di merda' ('shitty nigger') was not necessarily an expression of racism. In this case, the court ruled, it was part of a normal exchange of insults. And in an earlier case, heard on 5 December 2005, the Supreme Court found in favour of a 25-year-old man from Trieste who had called two Colombian women 'dirty niggers' ('sporche negre') while he was hitting them: the term was not racist, but rather denoted a 'generic antipathy'. (*il manifesto* 10, 18.3.06)

MALTA

Concerns over increase in xenophobia

There is concern that Malta, an overwhelmingly white, Catholic nation, is experiencing an upsurge of xenophobia. While some of this may be linked to the formation, in 2005, of the anti-immigrant Republican National Alliance and the activities of the far-Right group, Viva Malta, the government and the conservative church hierarchy are also being blamed for failing to explain why boat people are arriving in Malta and thereby calming fears. According to the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice the extent of xenophobia is impossible to codify because of the lack of official data on racism.

Anti-immigration party attacks multiculturalism

According to Martin Degiorgio, leader of the Republican National Alliance, 'We don't want a multicultural society.' 'Haven't you seen the problems it has brought to France and Britain?' He has also said that Malta never had minorities and whilst it used to be 'impossible to find a black African walking in Maltese streets, nowadays they are everywhere in the capital'. (*Washington Post* 4.6.06)

The European Network Against Racism says that acts of violence and arson indicate a growing violence within Malta and are linked to issues surrounding asylum seekers. (Press release, ENAR Malta 11.4.06)

Neo-Nazi leader prosecuted

One of the most notorious of the anti-immigrant spokesmen is Norman Lowell, who heads the extreme-Right movements Long Live Malta and Imperium Europa and has been dubbed Malta's Le Pen. In July, Lowell was brought to trial on three accounts of inciting racial hatred and for offending the president of Malta. Lowell has been linked to threats to the Jesuit community and attacks on journalists, cited below. In one of his speeches he declared that 'Our aim is that Malta, this sacred island, this land of honey, becomes the first liberated nation in the white world, liberated from the enemy within and the one who comes from without. Malta, in the southernmost point of Europe, could spark a flame that sets Europe alight.' (*Elpais.es* 11.8.06).

Refugee rights campaigners targeted for arson

AI has called on the Maltese authorities to take action against a pattern of arson attacks against persons and organisations who have spoken out against racism. The Jesuit community which has taken a pro-active role in speaking out against racism and defending the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have been particularly targeted. According to the Reverend Paul Pace, the Jesuit Refugee Service's advocacy for immigrants was the reason arsonists have torched seven cars belonging to Jesuits and the house and car of the group's assistant director.

Details of attacks on Jesuit Community

The following incidents have been recorded by AI:

- In November 2005, two cars belonging to a Jesuit community resident at Dar Manuel Magri in Imsida were set alight.
- In early March 2006, the front door of a poet's house was subject to an arson attack just a few days after he launched a book of poetry which promoted tolerance and refugee rights.
- On 13 March, seven cars belonging to the Jesuit community were burnt down during the night, just a few days after the launch of a report on racism.
- On 11 April, a car belonging to Katrine Camilleri, a lawyer with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the door to her residence, metres across the street, were set ablaze. (The prime minister and the social solidarity minister phoned Dr. Camilleri to express solidarity.)
- On 3 May, the front door of the house of Savior Balzan, the editor of *MaltaToday* was torched by arsonists. The editor had written an editorial on racism and immigration in the period immediately preceding the attack.
- On 13 May, the home of Daphne Caruana Galizia, a journalist from the *Malta Independent*, with a similar track record of anti-racism, was attacked. Investigating officers described the attack as a military style operation. One said he had 'never seen such a great supply of fuel used in a single act of arson'. Arsonists set ablaze five tyres filled with petrol which were placed against a back door to her house. A layer of smashed glass and petrol had been spread on the road in front of the house, presumably in order to obstruct any attack by the family to flee, or help to arrive. On the night of this arson, neo-Nazis were holding a barbecue nearby and the police have been criticised for their failure to raid the party, as well as their response to the attack on Galizia.

United against terror

On May 14, more than sixty journalists, columnists and editors from the majority of the Maltese media, together with other citizens, signed an open letter to the Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi in a united stand against the terrorist attacks against fellow journalists. Caruana Galizia commented in a press statement that 'It is not immigration that threatens our culture now, but nascent fascism and neo-Nazism, with the violence and intimidation that are associated with those political creeds... Perhaps my fellow Maltese will one day realise that it is far better to live freely in a country where there are many immigrants, than to live in a country where there are no immigrants, but where one is too afraid to speak or to be different for fear of being attacked.'

Police incompetence criticised

Journalists have expressed the view that the police are incompetent and incapable of protecting journalists and hunting down the culprits. The attack on *MaltaToday* editor Savior Balzan particularly incensed opinion, as Balzan's residence is situated in front of the Naxxar police station.

In May, police issued a press release saying that police investigation teams had been bolstered. While police were exploring all possible avenues, this was 'regrettably so far with negative outcome'. Several people had been arrested and other interviewed at length, including members of the far-Right movement Viva Malta. (MaltaMedia.com 21.5, 9.6.06, *MaltaToday* 14.5.06)

Immigrants at Marsa open centre victims of racist attacks

An attack on Yves Mbotu, aged 18, as he left an immigrant centre to make a phone call in the early hours of the morning, is believed to have been racially motivated. As he was making his way back to the Marsa open centre, the driver of a car drove at him, causing his body to be flung against a nearby wall. The attackers then drew up. 'I have no idea why they attacked me, but I can only assume it's because of my skin colour', said Mr Mbotu, who has been in Malta for two years, eighteen months of which were in detention. Immigrants at the Marsa centre say taunts and threats are not uncommon. A month before, a group of Congolese men said they were chased by a car, but managed to thwart their attackers by throwing stones. (*Times of Malta* 5.6.06)

NETHERLANDS

Extreme-Right groups blamed for racist violence

Extreme-Right groups have been associated with incidents of racist violence and critics of the Dutch justice and interior ministers have attacked them for failing to tackle extremist websites such as Holland Hardcore, which has tried to incite people to set fire to mosques and Islamic schools. Violence has been approved by the leader of the nationalist Nieuw Rechts party, Michiel Smit, who recently released a book entitled 'More guns, less crime', sketching out his opinion that all Dutch citizens should have free possession of guns and should be able to use weapons and sprays to defend their homes and workplaces. (*Searchlight* 2.06)

A recent report by the Anne Frank Foundation found that between 2001 and August 2005, 125 right-wing youth groups were in existence. The organisation documented 200 racist incidents, 140 of which were violent. The magazines *Searchlight* and *De Fabel van de illegaal* have also documented many of the most serious incidents of violence in 2005. (*Searchlight* 2.06)

Meanwhile, the organisation *De Fabel van de illegaal* has identified three locally active groups: in Zoetermeer, the Jeugdstorm Nederland organisation; the Aktiefront Zuid-Holland Zuid (AFZHZ) in the Drechtsteden region; and the violent Skinhead Jugend Rijnland (SJR) in the town of Alphen aan den Rijn, near Leiden. (*De Fabel van de illegaal* 77/78, Summer 2006)

Racist attacks blamed on Aktiefront Zuid-Holland Zuid

The AFZHZ, which is said to promote the fight against multiculturalism and 'anti-white terror', was suspected of carrying out violent racist attacks in May 2006. On 19 May, an Antillean man was savagely beaten by six Nazis in Papendrecht, causing head injuries, a shattered eye-socket, broken ribs and the loss of several teeth. Three of the attackers were taken into custody, among them 24-year-old Robbie Groeneveld and a convicted German Nazi, Michael Krick, who is prominent in the extremist right-wing Racial Volunteer Force. (*Searchlight* 9.06)

Anti-Semitic incidents down, but serious attacks increase

Although the Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israël received in 2005 half the number of complaints of anti-Semitic incidents than in 2004, the number of serious complaints, including threats, violence and defacement of Jewish buildings, was the second highest ever. The overall downward trend, though, was due to improved relations with Muslim organisations and cooperative projects such as football matches. (*Expatica News* 17.8.06)

NORWAY

More action on hate crimes needed

Despite there having been three governmental action plans against racism since 1992, there are still no accurate statistics on racial violence in Norway – a fact highlighted by the Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo. Now, justice minister Storberget has promised to usher in tougher penalties for those convicted of 'hate crimes', after a rise in violence against homosexuals and ethnic minorities. (*Aftenposten* English web desk 5.9.06)

POLAND

Government linked to growing climate of hate

There has been widespread criticism of the new coalition government which incorporates the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defence Party, both of which have been associated with extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism and homophobia (see *European Race Bulletin* 53). And in June, the appointment of the former editor of a neo-Nazi skinhead magazine *Front* as deputy chair of Poland's public TV network, was also noted with alarm across Europe. The European parliament passed a resolution criticising the growing signs of racism and anti-Semitism in Poland. Anti-racist organisations in Poland say that the actions of the government are creating a climate whereby fascist organisations can flourish. In July, the Blood & Honour website was closed down and one man charged with inciting hatred. The website urged its followers to collect information on 'anti-fascist and anti-racist activities, on coloured immigrants' and others who sympathise, for instance, with homosexuals. (*BBC News* 7.6.06, *Deutsche Welle* 24.6.06, www.alternatywa.com)

SLOVAKIA

European parliament concerned about nationalist influence in new government

Slovakia's governing coalition which took office in the Summer includes the Slovak National Party (SNS), a far-Right nationalist party led by Ján Slota. The Socialists in the European parliament have called for special monitoring of the new government, pointing out that 'This party is clearly and openly extremist, racist, intolerant and ultranationalist'. Slota has been mayor of the town of Zilina and is well-known for his outbursts against Roma, homosexuals and the Hungarian minority. (*EU Observer* 7.7.06)

ERRC cites anti-Roma prejudice throughout governing coalition

In a letter sent to the three major pan-European institutions, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) cited anti-Romani and other harmful statements by members of the parties of the Slovak governing coalition, including sixteen statements made by Ján Slota. The SNS, it warns, has played a 'vibrant role in degrading relations between Roma and non-Roma in Slovakia, and inflaming ingrained anti-Romani sentiments in the country'. (ERRC 6.7.06)

Highest recorded number of extremist crimes in eight years

According to police statistics, the number of crimes motivated by extremism and racism that came to the attention of the police in 2005 was the highest in the past eight years. But the NGO People Against Racism says that there are far more racist attacks than the 121 cases registered by the police last year, and that 'police officers are reluctant to deal with the problem responsibly'. (*Czech News Agency* 18.4.06)

Police say that the number of racially motivated attacks in central Slovakia has increased in 2006. In 2005, the police investigated some seventy racially motivated crimes. Left-wingers, anarchists and those with an alternative lifestyle have also been attacked. (*Czech News Agency* 28.4.06)

Police officers dismissed after skinheads murder student Daniel Tupy

The most serious crime motivated by right-wing extremism, was the murder, probably by a group of skinheads, of the 21-year-old university student, Daniel Tupy, on the banks of the Danube in Bratislava in November 2005. It seems that Daniel Tupy was targeted simply because he had long hair. Interior minister Vladimir Palko reacted to the failure to curb neo-Nazi violence by sacking the police chief in Bratislava's fifth district where the student had been killed, as well as dismissing the director of riot police in Trnava, west Slovakia. (*Czech News Agency*, 18, 28.4.06, website of Dzenzo Association 2.11.05)

More skinhead attacks

In November 2005, nineteen skinheads were charged with various offences following a gang attack on a bar in Piestany, west Slovakia. Four visitors to the bar suf-

fered injuries after being pelted with rocks. Days after this incident, skinheads attempted to attack a group of secondary students after they boarded a train in Piestany. (*Czech News Agency* 15.11.06)

Anti-Roma incidents

Kezmarok: six detained after anti-Roma assault

Six drunken youths aged 18 to 24 were detained after they attacked two young Romani women on Easter Monday in Kezmarok and beat up their brother who tried to intervene. (*Czech News Agency* 18.4.06)

Letanovce: Anti-Roma death threats sent to mayor

Peter Kacvinsky, mayor of Letanovce, received death threats after he approved the building of new houses for Roma. A skull with a fired cartridge as well as bones were found at the building site of the new accommodation along with threatening letters addressed to the mayor. (*Czech News Agency* 18.8.06)

Hungarian and Slovak prime ministers disagree after anti-Hungarian incidents

Following anti-Hungarian incidents, there were angry exchanges between the Hungarian and Slovak prime ministers.

On 25 August, a 23-year-old ethnic Hungarian woman was robbed, beaten up and had 'Hungarians, return to behind the Danube' marked on her T-shirt. The next day, police arrested three men bringing an 11-metre long banner reading 'death to the Hungarians' to a football game.

In response, Hungarian prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány condemned 'atrocities and increasing hatred against foreigners' and demanded his Slovak counterpart do the same.

Hungarian prime minister Gyurcsány said there was 'a direct link between the nationalists being part of the Slovak coalition and rising extremism'. Slovak prime minister Robert Fico, while denouncing 'all acts of extremism', rebuked the Hungarian prime minister for interfering in Slovak affairs. Fico also rejected a proposal from the opposition Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) to adopt a joint parliamentary declaration to address the issue and accused ethnic-Hungarian politicians of fostering nationalist feelings and trying to capitalise on recent incidents. (*EU Observer* 28.8.06)

SPAIN

Islamophobia blamed for growth in racist attacks

There is concern at the growing number of racist attacks across Spain. The increase in Islamophobia since the train bombings that killed 191 people in Madrid two years ago has been documented by *El País* which, on 17 April 2006, listed a number of mosques and other Muslim targets which have been ransacked, burned or had copies of the Qur'an set alight by intruders. The police attribute most of the attacks to extreme rightwingers and skinhead groups. The true extent of the attacks is probably not known, as Spanish imams

prefer not to publicise attacks in order to avoid copycat incidents and angry reactions from within their own community.

Documented attacks

Attacks cited by *El País* and the *Guardian* include:

- January 28: Right-wing extremists rampaged through the Bilal mosque in Soria, burning the Qur'an, destroying the library and throwing seventy books into rubbish bins.
- Over the Easter weekend, the Sidi Bel Abbas sanctuary in Ceuta, where one third of the population is Muslim, was subjected to an arson attack. A small oratory containing the tomb of a venerated Muslim figure was burned down. Three months before, another sanctuary in the enclave was attacked by arsonists. The attack was attributed either to racists or to fundamentalists opposed to the form of worship practised by local Muslims. Authorities stated that they were considering putting security cameras around mosques, shrines and buildings belonging to other religions in order to dissuade potential attackers.
- The eastern region of Catalonia is believed to be witnessing the most attacks. At least four towns – Girona, Salt, Pallafrugell and San Vicens de Castellet – have had mosques and Muslim butchers attacked. The Frente Negro and the Party Against Immigration (PCI) have been blamed for the attacks, some of which involved Molotov cocktails.
- In the eastern town of Reus, police detained two carloads of skinheads armed with Molotov cocktails as they headed towards local mosques.

Impact of cartoon affair

The Danish cartoon affair led to an increase in insults and death threats against the Muslim community in Spain. In the first week of February, in the middle of the cartoons crisis, the leaders of the Great Mosque of Valencia received telephone threats: 'Get out, we don't want you here. Moors go home'. The façade was sprayed with swastikas and allusions to March 11, as were other houses of prayer in the city and in nearby towns like Torrent. Syrian and Algerian families living next to Valencia's general hospital had photocopies of the Mohammed cartoons stuffed in their mailboxes with insults. (*El País*, English language version 20 4.06, *Guardian* 18.4.06)

Conviction for murder of Angolan youth draws attention to racist murders

Following a retrial, Jose David Fuertes Sanchez has been found guilty of the assassination of Augusto Ndombele Dominga, a 16-year-old youth from Angola who was killed in 2002. The conviction came after the Movement Against Intolerance took on the mantle of popular prosecutor, charging Fuertes with murder aggravated by racism, in order to help the parents of the victim to gain justice for their son. The case drew attention to institutional responses to racist attacks in Spain, with the Movement Against Intolerance pointing out that there have been at least seventy-five murders since 1992 which should have been classified as hate crimes.

The case of Augusto Ndombele Domingo

In July 2002, the Angolan youth went with a friend to a pub in Alcorcón, Madrid. His friend got into an argument. It appeared that the argument had calmed down, but then Fuertes stabbed Augusto twice. Fuertes had a criminal record and had been associated with neo-Nazi gangs linked with football teams in Madrid. The Supreme Court had initially declared Fuertes innocent in 2002 but, in October 2004, the highest administrative court overruled the decision and ordered a retrial. (Press release, Movement Against Intolerance 2.6.06)

Almeria: once again immigrants attacked

Towards the end of 2005, The Almerian Platform of Equal Rights drew attention to the frequent attacks on foreign workers in Almeria and the growing climate of insecurity which is a way of life in districts such as El Ejido or Níjar. Attacks on migrants, particularly Moroccans, were regularly taking place –made worse by constant police harassment under the pretext of routine checks. The Platform for Equal Rights says that most of these attacks go unreported due to victims' and witnesses' fear of retaliation from the mafias and beatings from police officers. In February 2005, Hosni Azzouz was murdered. The trial of his assailants is yet to take place. (correspondence from Mediterranean Social Forum, 23.11.05)

Sabadell: concern at attitudes towards racist attacks

Reyes Serra, president of the Association of Residents from the Concòrdia de Sabadell District, called a press conference to draw attention to the number of death threats he has received from neo-Nazis and skinheads, and the fact that no-one is ever prosecuted. Serra is a high-profile supporter of the victims of racist attacks and, for his pains pictures with his name have appeared in the street with the word 'muerte'. (*El País* 21.1.06).

Black Portuguese man attacked

In June 2006, there was criticism of a court in Sabadell, which bailed three young men charged with a brutal attack on a black Portuguese citizen. Francisco U suffered a facial fracture leading to an eye operation after being attacked in Castellar del Valles by youths who shouted xenophobic insults before kicking him unconscious. Bail was granted despite the accused men's previous criminal records. One of them had been arrested a total of sixteen times for racist conduct between August 2002 and April 2005. The mayor, Monseratt Gatell, had described one of the suspects, Abraham F as 'destabilising and a potential danger for the community' and had called, in the name of the entire town council, for 'the severest penalty for this fascist attack'. She called upon the regional government delegation and the Autonomous Government of Catalonia to take more action against neo-Nazi organisations which were active in the town and throughout the region. (*El Periódico* 21.6.06, *Paloma Arenós* 21.4.06)

Network of Citizens' Associations formed to counter hate

The Network of Citizens' Associations against Racism and Intolerance (ACCRI) was launched on 14 June 2006 in Madrid to campaign for new laws against racism, intolerance and crimes of hatred. ACCRI's founding

members include the Movement Against Intolerance, the Pan-African Federation, the Gay and Lesbian Federation and Integration of Immigrants (ASISI). (Madridpress.com 14.6.06)

SWEDEN

Police statistics fail to register violence against Muslims

A report published in November 2005 by Säpo, the Swedish intelligence service, revealed that hate crime against homosexuals and ethnic and religious minorities had risen sharply in Sweden. Anti-Semitic hate crime was reported to have risen 44 per cent between 2004 and 2005 (to 151 reported incidents) and xenophobic crimes increased by 27 per cent to 2,263 cases. No figures were available for Islamophobic crimes, but attacks or threats against Muslims are said to have been widespread. An investigation by the Ekot radio programme reported that four out of ten buildings of Muslim organisations had been attacked, vandalised or damaged, and four out of ten threatened. An earlier report by the Swedish Board of Integration stated that Muslims were exposed to the most racial harassment in the country. (*The Local* 24, 25.10.05)

Malmö: arson attacks threaten financial ruin for Islamic Centre

Towards the end of 2005, the Islamic Centre in Malmö revealed that it was threatened with financial ruin after arson attacks between 2003 and the end of 2005. Insurance companies were reluctant to provide cover for fear of further attacks. Bejzat Becirov, the chief executive of the centre, wrote to Swedish prime minister Göran Persson asking for financial support, but was offered only a half-promise to help the centre, which has 57,000 members. (*The Local* 16.11.05)

SWITZERLAND

Swiss elite criticised for 'trivialising' racism

Doudou Diène, UN special rapporteur on racism, recently criticised the Swiss political elite for 'trivialising' racism. With the 'absence of national legislation against racism and discrimination', victims were left with 'no means of complaint or redress'. (*Swiss Info* 14.1.06)

Anti-Semitic incidents increase

Anti-Semitic crime has increased perceptibly: in French-speaking parts of the country, such crime was said to have doubled in 2005. A report by the Inter-Communal Coordination Against Anti-Semitism and Defamation recorded seventy-five such acts in 2005, compared to thirty-four the previous year. Particular incidents of note included arson attacks on a synagogue and a Jewish-owned clothes shop in Lugano and the desecration of the grand synagogue in Geneva with pro-Nazi slogans. (*JTA News* 28.4.06)

St. Gallen: African family victimised

A 43-year-old mentally ill woman partially confessed to an eight-month racist campaign against a family in Unterwasser, St Gallen. The doctor, his African wife and two children received seventeen threatening letters and their home was attacked on several occasions. In one letter, the perpetrator threatened to burn down the family's house unless they left the village. The police are reported as saying that the campaign had 'nothing to do with racism' and the family has since decided to emigrate to South Africa. (*Swiss Info* 16.12.05)

UNITED KINGDOM

Are racist murders downplayed if victims are foreign and/or Muslim?

Research by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) has found that, despite some advances made since the Macpherson inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, there is a mood of public acceptability of high levels of violent racist crimes on Britain's streets. In some cases, the racial element of a crime is downplayed by police and courts, particularly where the victims are foreign nationals and/or Muslim. The IRR has identified sixty-five cases as racially motivated killings over the last thirteen years. It comments that in the climate of anti-Muslim racism that has followed September 11, and especially after 7 July 2005, many of the victims of racially motivated attacks have been Muslim, with asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers also seen as 'easy targets'.

Improved identification of racially motivated crimes needed

There is evidence that while in some areas police have improved their performance in terms of investigating crimes as racially motivated, in others there is still some way to go. Part of the reason for this is confusion as to what constitutes a racial attack or murder. In order to rectify this, the IRR suggests that the identification of racially motivated murders and attacks would benefit from an objective evaluation of the whole context in which a murder or attack takes place and not just on the skin colour or ethnicity of the alleged perpetrator or victim. 'In particular, the IRR would regard a murder or attack as racially motivated if the evidence indicates that someone of a different ethnicity, in the same place and similar circumstances, would not have been attacked in the same way.' Subject to the above, the IRR would take a formal legal finding or allegation of racial motivation as prima facie (but not definitive) evidence that a murder or attack was racially motivated. (IRR News Service 27.4.06)

Parliamentary inquiry reports on anti-Semitism

A parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism has found that there has been a steady increase in attacks on Jewish people and property since 2000. The inquiry recommended that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) investigate why fewer than one in ten anti-Semitic attacks resulted in prosecution. (*Guardian* 7.9.06)

West Yorkshire: killing of Asian taxi-driver treated as racially aggravated

Mohammad Parvaiz, a 41-year-old Asian taxi driver, died of head injuries on 22 July 2006 following an attack whilst he was working in Golcar, Huddersfield (West Yorkshire). Police described it as a racially aggravated murder.

Police believe that racist language was used during the attack on the Pakistani-born husband and father of three by a gang of youths. They were also following a line of inquiry that the murder was linked to a previous disturbance in Golcar on 11 June. Four teenage boys have been charged with murder and remanded in custody.

Taxi drivers protest killing

Many of the 3,000 taxi drivers in the Kirklees area of West Yorkshire held a seven-hour strike one week after the murder. Chairman of Kirklees Private Hire Association, Mohammed Akmal, said: 'We held a two-minute silence for Mr Parvaiz and his family and we stood together to send out a joint message of solidarity that we need more protection ... About 80-90% of the general public are on our side. We've had a lot of support from passengers who believe we should be able to do our job in safety.' They planned to present a set of proposals to the local council in order to receive greater protection at work: 'We want a zero tolerance campaign ... It's been going on for too long. If the general public get to know that the police will prosecute them then the message will hit home.'

An anti-racist petition was launched by local Liberal Democrat councillor Kath Pinnock, who sent copies to mosques, Sikh temples, churches, council offices and tenants' and residents' associations. (*BBC News* 24, 26, 28, 30.7.06, *Yorkshire Post* 29.6.06, *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* 31.7.06, *Guardian* 2.8.06, *Spenborough Guardian* 7.8.06)

Lancashire: was killing of Asian youth racially motivated?

Eight men have been arrested, two on suspicion of murder and the others for violent disorder, after Shezan Umarji, a 29-year-old student, died from stab wounds after a fight, involving around fifty white and Asian youths, many of whom were armed with knives, bottles and baseball bats, broke out on Preston's deprived Callon estate. Despite initial reports that the incident was not racially motivated, police are now considering this line of inquiry. According to Detective Superintendent Graham Gardner of the Lancashire Constabulary the 'extent of the abuse, who said it, and to whom, is by no means clear ... Nor is it clear at what point it was said. But witnesses have told us about the abuse, and it is incumbent on me to declare this a racial investigation. I'm not saying, however, he was killed because of the colour of his skin.'

Local youth reject police

There is tension in the local area about the role of the police. One man, who gave his name only as Khalid, rejected calls for a stronger police presence on the estate, saying: 'The police being here will make things worse. They'll increase tension between the two commu-

nities until it kicks off, and then they'll come down on us real hard ... They [the police] don't care about us, that's why they took so long to get here. Shezan could have been saved if the police and the ambulance had come quicker.'

Post 7/7 tensions in Preston

In 2005, there were 333 racist incidents in Preston, with 204 being racially aggravated crimes. The police saw this to be the result of a post-7/7 backlash, but the rise in the number of racist incidents was higher in Lancashire than the national average. (*Observer* 23.7.06, *Guardian* 24.7.06, *BBC News* 22, 25.7.06, 8.8.06)

Kent: killing of teenager racially motivated

Police are treating the killing of Christopher Alaneme, an 18-year-old black teenager, who was stabbed to death on 21 April 2006 on the streets of Sheerness, Kent, as a case of racially motivated murder. Another man was also stabbed in the attack, but he has been released from hospital. Five men have been arrested on suspicion of the murder. (*BBC News* 2, 24, 25.5.06)

Scotland: Chinese asylum seeker dies following attack in Glasgow

On the night of 24-25 July, Wei Wang, a 41-year-old Chinese asylum seeker, died from severe head injuries twelve days after an unprovoked attack near his home in the Sighthill area of Glasgow, where he had lived for only three months. Police have not established a motive, but did not rule out racism. Two other men were assaulted nearby earlier in the same evening, but police are unsure whether the attacks were linked. A 19-year-old man was later arrested and was due to appear at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 15 August. (*Glasgow Herald* 27.7.06, *BBC News* 7, 9.8.06)

London: arson attacks on Asian businesses lead to two deaths

Hamidi Hamidullah, a 31-year-old Afghan national, and 40-year-old Kashmiri, Khizar Hayat, died following a firebomb attack on a shop in Clapham, south London, where they worked. A 33-year-old black man, from Stockwell, was arrested on suspicion of carrying out the attack and two other similar attacks on Asian businesses in south London. The police were treating the attacks as racially motivated.

Details of other attacks

- On 14 April, a petrol bomb was thrown into the News at Nine newsagent in Tulse Hill, south London. One customer suffered leg burns but no one died.
- On 20 April, a petrol bomb was thrown inside an off licence in South Norwood. Again, no one died.
- The third attack (the fatal attack on the shop in Clapham) took place on 27 April. (*BBC News* 30.4.06, 2.5.06, *This is Local London* 3.5.06)

Arson attacks on mosques following anti-terror arrests

- On August 11, the Shahjalal mosque, Blacon, Chester was attacked by a gang of youths who poured accelerant through the door while worshippers were inside praying. The blaze was quickly extinguished. Police described it as a 'faith-hate crime' but said it was too

early to say whether it was linked to the terror alert.
• On August 12, intruders climbed onto the roof of the Al-Birr Masjid Mosque in Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, removed a tile, poured petrol into the building and set it on fire. On the same day, a man attempted to force his way into a home in Basingstoke and threatened the occupants, making racist and religious remarks, including specific references to the anti-terror arrests. (*Muslim News* 28.8.06)

Northern Ireland: attacks on migrant workers and Muslims escalate

In July, the publication of a new report by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities entitled 'The next Stephen Lawrence? Racist violence and criminal justice in Northern Ireland' focused attention on the escalating racial violence in Northern Ireland, with vulnerable migrant workers being targeted for attacks. The report's findings are backed up by police figures released in May 2006 which show a rise in racially-motivated attacks, including pipe bombs, bricks hurled through windows and assaults. During 2005-06, the police service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recorded 935 racial incidents, more than twice the number of incidents reported two years earlier. (*Guardian* 26.6.07)

Arson attack in County Armagh

A man was charged with arson, endangering life, possession of a petrol bomb and criminal damage after a petrol bomb attack on New Year's Day on the home of three Czechs living in Dollingstown, Co. Armagh. (*Irish Independent* 5.1.06)

Arson attack in Belfast

On 13 August, Polish migrant workers were hospitalised after their home in Belfast was set alight in a suspected racist attacks by arsonists. (*Observer* 13.8.06)

More attacks on migrant workers

In one weekend in July there were six serious racist attacks, including arsons. In one incident, five masked men burst into the home of three Eastern European women in Cloughey, Co. Down and beat them with baseball bats. According to Fiona McCausland, a community worker in Lisburn, migrant workers' vulnerability identifies them as a target. 'They are exploited by employers, they have very poor English, they don't know their housing or employment rights. On top of all that, they're

physically attacked and they don't even have family, neighbour or any other support system available to them.'

Muslims targeted

Anti-racist activists say anyone Arab looking is called 'Bin Laden'. In one incident, a man in Bangor was attacked with a knife by two local men who accused him of blowing up the Twin Towers. When his wife ran for help, they threw bottles at her. Then they poured alcohol over him and tried to set him on fire.

Tourists attacked

Teenagers from India – part of a cricket team on tour – were chased through the streets of Belfast and their accommodation stoned. The attack was reported on UTV under the headline 'Racists bring Belfast to a new low'. (UTV 13.6.06)

Attacks worse in Loyalist areas

Attacks often occur in working-class Loyalist areas which traditionally have links with far-Right groups and where resentment over new migrants is at its keenest. Many migrant workers tend to live in such areas, as houses are cheaper.

Low prosecution rate

The report also focuses on the low police clear-up rate for racial incidents (currently 20 per cent). Barbara Muldoon of the Anti-Racist Network said she knew of no other crime with such a low prosecution rate. In response, police launched an advertising campaign, 'Hate Crime is Wrong', and attempted to improve the detection and prosecution of hate crimes. (*Sunday Tribune* 2.7.06, 4 *Local News*)

Islamophobia and xenophobia

BELGIUM

North Africans falsely accused of street killing

The Executive of Muslims in Belgium (EMB) have denounced the public and media debate which followed the stabbing to death of Joe Van Holsbeeck, a 17-year-old Belgian youth, on 12 April 2006 by youths who sought to steal his MP3 player. The killing was widely reported in the press with claims that the killers were of North African origin and a demonstration of more than

80,000 people took place in protest at the murder. Later, two youths of Polish origin were arrested for the attack. The EMB warned that the drawing of hasty and false conclusions could lead to reactions motivated by racist or religious considerations. Investigators at the Regional Judicial Service (SJA) of Brussels agreed that it was 'regrettable that shortly after the murder, the finger was pointed at the North African community'. The SJA said that at no time had the Federal Police briefed that North Africans committed the crime.

Regional politician criticised

There was also strong criticism of Fouad Ahidar (SPA), a centre-left regional parliamentarian of Moroccan origin who participated in the unfounded theory that the aggressors were from the Moroccan or Turkish communities. He had denounced the killing as 'a murder that stinks of racism', adding that if 'an immigrant just gets a few kicks from police officers, half of Brussels would be on the streets in solidarity with the victim'. (*Migration News Sheet* 5.06)

Brussels primary school dismissal of teachers wearing hijab upheld

Flanders' State School Appeals Council has ruled that two Muslim primary school teachers in the Brussels municipalities of Etterbeek and Sint-Pieters-Woluwe should not be reinstated after they were dismissed for wearing the hijab. The Appeals Council says that by wearing traditional Muslim headscarves to school, the teachers compromised the religious neutrality of the state school system. (Flandersnews.be 17.8.06, *Migration News Sheet* 8.06)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Political and military leaders cite fears over Islam

The deputy foreign minister, Jaroslav Basta, was quoted in *Pravo* as saying that the radical 'Islamic minority in Europe has started to demand special rules. Today they resent caricatures, but in time they may demonstrate against eating pork and drinking alcohol'. Miroslav Krejčík, chief of Czech army intelligence, said that the Islamic radical influence in Europe was 'an erosion and a question of whether we will or won't be absorbed'.

There are about 10,000 Muslims living in the Czech Republic. (*Migration News Sheet* 4.06)

Under-cover mosque documentary demonises Muslims

Muslim organisations in the Czech Republic and the Council of Arabic Ambassadors have criticised a documentary transmitted in October 2005 on the public station CT2, which used undercover footage of Muslims inside a Prague mosque located in Cerny Most accompanied by images of terrorism.

The director Jiří Ovečka said that without the hidden camera he would not have been able to learn the 'true, real stance of Czech Muslims on Islamization of the Czech Republic'. He claimed to have unearthed 'alarming' views on subjects such as Islam, Europe, terrorism and the role of women, with one mosque-goer (secretly filmed) calling for the implementation of Islamic law, including the death penalty for adultery, in the Czech Republic. Ovečka said that any xenophobia the documentary created was not the result of anything he did. 'It's like this: during official shooting they were peaceful, nice.' But hidden 'camera footage showed something else – aversion, hatred toward Europe, the entire world, and a mild attitude toward terrorism'.

Criticism

Marek Canek, a project coordinator with the Prague Multicultural Center, said the documentary was edited in

such a way that it fed into pre-existing xenophobia. 'I consider it a scandal that it has been produced and broadcast by public television. It fits in the general frame of fear of Islam and Muslims coming to us from other parts of Europe.' The use of a hidden camera makes it seem as though such discussions in mosques are secretive, when in fact anyone can film inside a mosque with permission.

Members of the Muslim community filed a complaint with the Czech Radio and TV Broadcasting Council (RRTV) saying that the programme was biased, provoked fears and manipulated footage to promote false stereotypes. A report released by the European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP) in February 2006 found that Czech public television was 'marred by excessive politicization'. The station has been penalised for biased reporting in the past. (*Prague Post* 1.3.06)

DENMARK

General turn of debate Islamophobic

According to an article in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Islamophobic rhetoric in Denmark is not confined to the extreme Right. In the media, not a day goes by without negative headlines – with immigrants and refugees from Islamic countries made scapegoats for every negative development in Denmark, from housing shortage to criminality. Denmark's prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen does not consider the harsh tone of the debate a problem and dismissed doubts voiced in the Council of Europe and the UN, saying that it was 'nonsense' to accuse the Danes of xenophobia and that 'Among us in Denmark, there is a long tradition of unprejudiced debates, while in other countries the gap between the people and the elite is growing'. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 20.1.06)

Danish People's Party sets Islamophobic, xenophobic tone

'I regret nothing. Not one speech. Not one word', said Pia Kjaersgaard, the Danish People's Party (DPP) leader, following a request from the party leadership for a more 'amicable and urbane' tone in the immigration debate. The Politiken's editor Toger Seidenfaden also criticised the party for being misguided in its attacks on Islam and Islamic fundamentalists. The DPP's Soren Espersen said, 'I reserve the right to attack people who claim to have a cocksure method of gaining access to paradise – whether it's left wing politicians or Muslims'. (*UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines* 31.1.06)

Prominent DPP politician wants limits on Muslim immigration

Morten Messerschmidt, a rising star in the Danish People's Party, says that only by keeping the number of Muslims as low as possible and containing a patently backward culture, would it be possible to keep Denmark a free, democratic and prosperous country. (*Guardian Weekly* 7.3.06)

Lack of Muslim cemeteries highlighted

The fact that the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs has approved the construction of a Muslim cemetery on land bought by the Danish Islamic Burial Foundation in

Copenhagen seven years ago has been linked to the so-called 'cartoon affair'.

Islam is the second largest religion in Denmark after the Lutheran Protestant church. A bone of contention has been the lack of an Islamic cemetery, and for seven years the Burial Foundation has been involved in a legal struggle over the cemetery. (*Islam Online* 10.4.06)

The site for the cemetery, in Brøndby, southwest of Copenhagen, has already been struck by several incidents of vandalism, including the daubing of swastikas – before it has even opened. Similar vandalism has also taken place at the Islamic religious community centre in Copenhagen. (*Copenhagen Post* 24.7.06)

Academic book suggests Islamophobia widespread

Professor Jens Frolund Thomsen has published a book based on a questionnaire distributed to 1,500 people in 2002, asking Danes their attitudes and opinions about ethnic minorities. 'There is a near hostility from many people toward immigrants and refugees who practise Islam', said Thomsen to daily newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. 'Forty per cent believe that Islam is a threat to our democracy.' The book also found that personal and direct contact between Danes and immigrants created goodwill and that politicians should work harder to promote acceptance of Islam. (*Copenhagen Post* 15.8.06)

Islam book advert will be permitted at railway stations

The management of Rail Net Denmark has backed down on a decision not to permit an advertisement for a book about Islam written by Jorgen Baek Simonson at Norreport railway station in Copenhagen. The Rail Net Denmark division that monitors advert space had originally found that posters advertising 'What is Islam' could be deemed offensive and denied permission on the grounds of ethical guidelines for pornographic, religious and political advertisements. But the company Rail Net Denmark overruled its advertising department, stating that 'The poster refers to religion, but it's not against our rules'. The transport minister and opposition MPs had voiced concerns that the decision not to allow the advert was a knee-jerk reaction to the cartoon crisis. Willy Sovndal, chair of the Socialist People's Party had pointed out that books by Scientologists, as well as adverts for the DPP and its 'Breath of fresh air' slogan had all, in the past, been plastered over the station. (*Copenhagen Post* 8.3.06)

Feminists divided over TV host who wore the headscarf

Feminist organisations were divided over the appearance of Denmark's first female Muslim TV host who wore a hijab. Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, a 24-year-old Danish Muslim of Palestinian origin, hosted an eight-part programme on the fallout from the cartoon affair. Feminist Forum, a Danish women's organisation, said Abdol-Hamid's TV presence 'strengthens ethnic and gender equality in Denmark'. But Vibeke Manniche, the head of Women for Freedom, thought otherwise: 'The choice of Asmaa Abdol-Hamid ... is an insult to both Danish and Muslim women ... She sends the signal that an honourable woman cannot go out unless her head is covered.' (*Islam Online* 5.4.06)

DPP attacks TV station

Although Asmaa Abdol-Hamid said that she had received a lot of letters of support, the DPP criticised the TV network, with legal advisor Aase Madsen saying that the Muslim TV host was using a 'public service channel as a pulpit to persuade others about the good things about Islam'. The TV show responded that Asmaa Abdol-Hamid got the job to host the show simply because 'she was the most competent candidate'. (*Straits Times* 4.4.06)

EU

ENAR report highlights dramatic increase in Islamophobia

A report by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), based on research conducted by non-governmental organisations in twenty countries, suggests that the political reaction to terrorism has made life harder for minorities. It highlights a trend towards 'increased tolerance for discriminatory behaviour, particularly against immigrants and Muslims' adding that 'a lack of political will to address racism is sometimes evident and disturbing'. There has been a dramatic increase in Islamophobia, particularly in France. (Press release, ENAR, 25.7.06)

FRANCE

French military and police accused of anti-Muslim bias

AI's 2006 World Report highlights the brutality of French police and states that the 'racism of police officers and other state officials is aimed at persons of the Muslim faith or ethnic minorities'. (*Agence France Presse* 23.5.06)

A report by the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) entitled 'French Servicemen of Immigrant Origin' found that Muslims serving in the French army were routinely mocked, discriminated against and sometimes denied their religious rights. (*Islam Online* 24.9.05)

Opposition and support for mosques

Belfort: Although the Mayor of Belfort has approved plans for a mosque to be constructed by 2007, Christophe Grudler (DVD), the head of the local opposition party, has mounted a campaign against the mosque, holding a protest at the site planned for the mosque which he described as 'inappropriate and unwelcome'. Grudler says that the mosque should not occupy a central location near the town's fortress and that it would be sufficient to enlarge existing prayer rooms on the outskirts of town. He claims that planning permission for the mosque, which is to be funded via voluntary contributions made to the Comité des Musulmans du Territoire de Belfort (CMTB), is illegal as the site is classed as a historical monument. According to Kader Kaddouri, president of the CMTB, 'Mr. Grudler prefers Muslims to remain confined to the suburbs of the town. He is trying to court extremists.' (*La Croix* 5.4.06)

Marseilles: The deadlock over the construction of a Great Mosque in Marseilles, where Muslims make up a quarter of the population, has been broken after Marseilles mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin allocated a plot of land for the mosque, paving the way for the project to begin. 'We wanted to perform this act of justice towards our Muslim compatriots in Marseilles, to allow them to build a place of worship like all the other major religions in Marseilles', said Gaudin. The project has repeatedly floundered due not only to resistance from the local community, but divisions within the Muslim community. (*Islam Online* 7.7.06)

Seine-Saint-Denis: Muslims in Noisy-le-Grand (Seine-Saint-Denis) have accused the town council of blocking all their attempts to acquire a place of worship. Following a court decision, Muslims were forced by police to evacuate the ground floor of a building they had been using as a mosque, and were having to pray on the lawn.

There are about 10,000 Muslims in Noisy-le-Grand – around 400 people had been using the makeshift El-Taqwa mosque, which they concede was a nuisance for local people as cars took over the parking spaces in front of the building. The Union of Muslim Associations in Saint-Denis have distanced themselves from the mosque-goers, describing them as Salafists (which the mosque-goers deny).

According to Mr Ibn Belkacem, 'On several occasions we have found premises in Noisy', but each time the council pre-empts the move. (*Le Monde* 29.7.06)

Hijab case – children taken into care

A father has been deprived of his parental rights by a court in southern France after he refused to let his four daughters – aged 4, 10, 13 and 14 – leave the confines of the family's small apartment in the town of Romans-sur-Isère. The man – whose name was not made public in order to protect the children – refused to let the girls attend school on the grounds that they would be made to remove their veils. The family had lived on benefits and the girls had learned the rudiments of reading and writing from their mother but had seen no book other than the Qu'ran. A social worker had bought the case to the authorities' attention and the children had been placed in care. (*Agence France Presse* 6.1.06)

Mayor refuses to allow veiled woman to marry

MRAP was to take legal action against the discriminatory actions of the UMP mayor of Montfermeil (Seine-Saint-Denis). Xavier Lemoine had demanded that a young Muslim woman 'sign a document promising not to wear a headscarf' on the day of her wedding ceremony. As she refused to do so, the ceremony, which was due to take place on 28 April, was postponed. According to MRAP, Lemoine had interpreted a 2 May 2005 circular aimed at forced and 'sham' marriages so as to ban any matrimonial celebration if 'an item of clothing hides the face' of the bride. (*Libération* 26.4.06)

GERMANY

Justice minister speaks against religious discrimination

Justice minister Brigitte Zypries told the weekly *Welt am Sonntag* on May 7 that Germany's Muslim minority was suffering a growing religious discrimination with many Germans wrongly associating Islam with terrorism. (*Islam Online* 14.5.06)

OECD representative criticises public debate on Islam

During a three-day fact-finding visit, Omur Orhun, the OECD's representative for combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, has criticised the lack of public support for Islam in Germany and suggested that Islam should be officially recognised in Germany. Speaking in Berlin on 26 April, Omur Orhun commented that because too few mosques were built, many Muslims were forced to pray in basements or factory buildings adding, 'That doesn't make a good impression on German society'. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 24.4.06)

Baden-Württemberg: minister suggests Muslims should leave

At a CDU meeting in Eningen, prominent CDU minister Willi Stächele allegedly said that he had evidence that 21 per cent of all Muslims living in the state regarded the Qu'ran and Germany's constitution as irreconcilable and that 'these 21 per cent should kindly leave'. His statements were reported by a regional television station which reported him as saying that it 'cannot be that I have to apologize for the constitution. The first question has to be: Are you one of those who feel pain when you hear about the constitution? Yes? Here's your ticket.'

Volker Beck, whip of the Green Party faction in the state parliament, said that unless Stächele withdrew these remarks, he could not continue in his post. The chair of the Greens, Claudia Roth, said that Stächele had 'insulted an entire religious community'. She called on Günter Oettinger (CDU), leader of Baden-Württemberg, to distance himself from Stächele. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 8.2.06)

Neo-Nazis join campaign against Berlin mosque

Residents in the small East Berlin neighbourhood of Pankow are opposing the construction of the area's first mosque on the grounds that they fear Islamicisation of the area and a drop in property prices. The local municipality, which had approved plans for the mosque's construction, has been accused of failing to consult with the community. Threats to burn down the mosque are now circulating.

A public meeting about the mosque was held in late March. There were around 1,500 people present, including a large contingent from the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party. Disorder broke out after participants shouted 'We are the People', a populist slogan that marked the end of the Communist regime. Following this, residents created a committee to oppose the mosque but distanced themselves from the NPD.

Background

Muslim leaders brought the plot of land, partly because it was the only available piece of land they could afford, after their mosque near the city's Tegel airport became too small. Although mosques are common in western Berlin with its big Turkish community, in the east only church towers peek out between apartment blocks. The Muslim community says that they will delay the construction of the mosque until the general climate improves. (*Islam Online* 14.5.06)

Campaign against Cologne mosque

Rightwingers have launched a campaign and are mobilising the support of local residents to oppose the construction of a major mosque in Cologne's Ehrenfeld district. More campaigns against mosques are said to have sprung up in other German cities. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 26.5.06)

More states ban hijab in state schools

As of June 2006, eight of Germany's sixteen federal states have banned the hijab in public schools. The CDU and FDP in Baden-Württemberg want the ban introduced throughout Germany. But the SPD and various cities and municipalities have different positions. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 21.1.06)

Baden-Württemberg

Authorities in Baden-Württemberg have banned kindergarten teachers from wearing the veil in a bid to mend a loophole in the law that does not extend the ban to kindergartens. The move came after the case of the teacher, Nuray A, who was instructed by the municipality of the small town of Ebersbach in the district of Göppingen, not to wear the headscarf to work at a kindergarten. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 20.10.05)

North-Rhine Westphalia

On May 31, the North-Rhine Westphalia regional parliament, where the Christian Democrats hold a majority, banned teachers in public schools from wearing the hijab. (*Islam Online* 1.6.06)

National uniform policy discussed in debate on burqa ban

In Bonn, two 18-year-old Muslim girls were banned from attending school for two weeks in April after they wore the burqa to school. The girls were alleged to have disturbed the peaceful running of the school and preventing normal classes taking place, but were free to return if they stopped wearing the burqas. Following this, justice minister Brigitte Zypries said that there might be a need to enforce a school uniform policy across the country.

Teachers union opposes dress code

The president of the German Teachers Association, Josef Kraus said it was 'incredibly naïve' to think introducing uniforms could reduce religious and social discrimination. He also pointed to Germany's 'problematic tradition' when it comes to school uniforms, a reference to the Nazi period and in particular the uniforms worn by the Hitler Youth. The Green party says that the introduction of school uniforms would be an unacceptable interference by the state in religious affairs. Instead of

solutions imposed by government, schools must seek out individual solutions 'that respect the situation on the ground and notably the religious freedom of pupils', said Krista Sager, a senior Green party member. (*Deutsche Welle* 8.5.06, no ref 28.4.06)

GREECE

Athens Muslims finally promised a mosque

Athens is the only EU capital without a purpose-built place of worship for its Muslim population. After much controversy and opposition, plans for the first mosque in Athens, since Turkish rule under the Ottoman empire, have been given the go-ahead by the Greek parliament and, even, finally, gained support from the Greek Orthodox Church.

The minister for development, George Souflias, has said that the mosque will be built in the Botanikos area of the Athens industrial district of Votanikos and paid for by the state. The decision came after nearly 10,000 Greek Muslims signed a petition asking the state to honour its pledge for a mosque in the capital made before Athens hosted the 2004 Olympic games. And in March, Europe's Human Rights Commissioner Alvaro Gil-Robles lamented the fact that Muslims in Athens still had to 'meet in secret in places unsuitable for prayer'. Tens of thousands of Muslim immigrants meet in makeshift mosques, in airless warehouses or private homes and have to travel hundreds of kilometres to northern Greece for weddings, burials and other ceremonies.

Orthodox Christians celebrate campaign

The Votanikos is the third plan for a mosque discussed so far. An earlier proposal for a sanctioned prayer site in the rural district of Peannia, 20 kilometres from the capital and close to Athens international airport was resisted by the local community and the Church which claimed that the sight of a minaret and dome would make tourists wonder whether they had landed in an Islamic state.

In April, another proposal to reinstate an 18th-century mosque in the central Athens district of Monastiraki, now used as a museum, was opposed by the Greek Orthodox Church, on the grounds of proximity to the capital's main cathedral. Haris Konidaris, a spokesman for the Church warned that an Islamic centre 'may operate, as European experience has shown, as a hotbed of extreme fundamentalist views'.

Meanwhile, at the Peannia site the Association of St. John saw the reaction to its opposition to the mosque as a victory. A small Greek Orthodox chapel has been built on the site in the staunchly conservative town of Peannia, close to Athens international airport as a means of celebrating the campaign's success. On special occasions a bell is rung and on the hilltop a cross now defiantly looks towards the airport. 'We are Orthodox Christians here', said a local resident. 'We believe that when you arrive at the frontier of Greece it would be better to see a church to symbolise our country rather than a mosque.' Dr. Athanasius Papagiorgiou, president of the Association said if the mosque had gone ahead, Peannia would have become 'another Kosovo' and that

'Kosovo used to be a centre for the orthodox faith'. (*BBC News* 18.7.06, *Islam Online* 27.7.06, www.newstatesman.com 24.4.06, *Migration News Sheet* 4.06)

IRELAND

Equality bodies highlight hidden problem of Islamophobia

Incidents of Islamophobia are going unreported because victims feel it is safer to ignore physical and verbal attacks, says the Equality Authority. While the scale of the problem is unknown, the Authority believes that there are sufficient indicators to suggest Ireland, like the rest of the world, is experiencing Islamophobia. These indicators range from physical and verbal abuse of Muslims to discrimination under the Equal Status Act. (*Irish Independent* 22.5.06)

In August 2006, the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) warned that Islamophobia had been heightened by irresponsible media reports and that, following the arrests in the UK for alleged participation in a conspiracy to bomb transatlantic flights, the 'tenor' of the debate regarding the Muslim community in Ireland had deteriorated with 'sensationalist allegations' circulating in the media. The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICCI) also warned that Islamophobia was at a peak and that Muslims felt 'drained' by the misinformation appearing in the press. The newspaper *Watt*, which published a front-page interview with the leader of the Muslim Supreme Council of Ireland (an organisation that barely exists and is unrepresentative of Muslim opinion in Ireland), was singled out for criticism by the NCCRI. (*Sunday Business Post Online* 27.8.06)

ITALY

Northern League opposes all mosques

The Northern League opposes all mosques on the grounds that mosques are political institutions where 'terrorists work to create a state within the state'. (*MSNBC News* 25.5.06)

Northern League support police officers who beat up Moroccan

Northern League MEP Mario Borghezio attempted to rally support at a far-Right rally in Sassuolo for two Carabinieri who were caught on a mobile phone video beating up a Moroccan who was drunk and allegedly resisting arrest. When the two officials involved were transferred to Bologna, petitions were circulated in their support. The film of the assault has appeared on a number of blogs and websites, with footage, apparently, showing the two officers jumping up and down on the victim. (*il manifesto* 1, 5.3.06)

Tuscany: Fallaci supports villagers' against mosque

A mosque planned for seven years in Colle di Val d'Elsa in a picturesque Tuscan town, situated on the road

between Florence and Siena, is dividing the community. The local authority supports the plan but there are objections from the Badia residents' committee who have organised a petition in support of a referendum on the mosque's construction. Other groups opposing the mosque's construction are 'Insieme per Colle' (Together for the town of Colle) which promoted the referendum, and the Civic List political party. Most controversially, Oriana Fallaci has voiced support for the campaign and vowed to blow up the mosque. Local graffiti states: 'No Mosque', 'Christian Hill' and 'Thanks to the communists the Arabs are in our house'. Other graffiti calls on the mayor, who supports the mosque's construction, to build it at his own house.

Residents want referendum

It was in 1999 that the town's previous mayor approved construction of an Islamic cultural centre in the Badia quarter's San Lazzaro park on the edge of town. The existing Islamic centre is in a former bakery and is simply too small to meet the community's needs and Muslims envisaged a prayer centre that would not only be a place to pray but a place to exchange cultural knowledge and assist integration – with a library, playground and parking lot. Funding for its construction was to be raised locally. According to Jabareen, the imam, 'We want it to be an Italian mosque, for Italian Muslims, that represents an Italian Islam'.

Letizia Franceschetti, president of the committee that proposed the referendum on the centre's construction, said that 'We are not against integration or the Islamic community' but Badia residents don't want to lose the grassy parkland, vineyards, and views of Chianti's hills in the distance. The town's mayor, Brogioni, however, says that the group is 'hiding behind the arguments of the park and environment'.

Post September 11 backlash

Residents' claims that their opposition has nothing to do with a fear of Islam are disputed by Brogioni who says that although the community was informed of the construction in 1999, there was no opposition to the plan until after September 11. Imam Jabareen, a Palestinian physiotherapist who has lived in Italy for more than ten years, has tried to combat local fears, by promoting a pact against terrorism as well as an annual interfaith forum. He has signed a contract with the local government, stating that the new Islamic centre's existence is contingent on the Muslim community not taking part directly or indirectly in illegal activities involving the centre.

Fallaci: 'I blow it up'

Oriana Fallaci [who died in September] apparently told a reporter that she intended to destroy the mosque. 'I do not want to see a 24-metre minaret in the landscape of Giotto when I cannot even wear a cross or carry a Bible in their country, so I blow it up'. (*BBC News* 19.7.06, *Telegraph* 7.6.06, *MSNBC Interactive* 25.5.06)

Brescia: series of killings fuel culture conflict debate

A series of unrelated killings in and around Brescia, in which the suspects are immigrants, has led a heated national debate on the challenges posed by immigration.

'Honour killing' prompts debate on religion

The case of Hina Saleem, a 20-year-old Pakistani woman who was murdered by her own family, apparently for living a western lifestyle, generated weeks of front-page media debate focusing on whether the religious beliefs of her family were to blame for her death and what happens when conservative beliefs collide with the mores of more permissive societies. The tone of the media debate was resented by Muslim leaders, who had condemned the killing and pointed out that for Islam, murder was a sin as well as a crime.

Tensions in Brescia

Brescia, a wealthy provincial capital east of Milan, is one of Italy's most industrialised areas. Angelo Alessandri of the Northern League told ANSA that immigration to Italy should be limited to people who were 'socially, culturally and religiously compatible with our way of life and legislation'. Such was the strength of feeling among local residents that the mayor's office issued a statement addressing the recent deaths, pledging increased security measures. Citing Ms Saleem's case, the statement said the city would work to ensure that women's rights were respected 'against any tribal or fundamentalist point of view'.

The Pakistani community, in particular, was feeling the heat of increased tensions. 'People used to be more tolerant; they used to be less allergic to seeing someone from a different race', commented Sajid Shah, founder of the Muhammadiyah association, which is building in Brescia the second biggest mosque in Italy. (*New York Times* 26.8.06)

Opus Dei criticised after magazine published cartoon

Studi cattolici, an Italian magazine close to Opus Dei, has been criticised by the Italian section of the World Muslim League for publishing a cartoon which was 'in extremely bad taste' and a 'provocation'. The drawing was a modern take on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and showed Virgil pointing out a figure to Dante, saying 'And that one there with his pants down, that's Italian policy towards Islam'. The caption used a play on words to suggest Italy had chickened out in its attitude to Muslims. A spokesman for Opus Dei said the magazine was not an official publication of the Roman Catholic Fellowship, and the edition had not been checked in advance. (*Guardian* 17.4.06)

Islamic Council proposal attacked

The speaker of the Italian Senate, Marcello Pera, who had launched a movement for the defence of Europe's Christian values, has criticised the Vatican for endorsing a proposal by the Islamic Council for a weekly 'Islamic hour' in schools with a strong Muslim presence. Pera said that the suggestion was 'the diametric opposite of any kind of attempt at integration'. In a note posted on the internet he said it 'tended, on the contrary, to reinforce the idea of an autonomous Muslim community inside the Italian state'.

The idea was proposed by Cardinal Renato Martino, a minister in the Vatican's government, the Roman Curia, and was backed by the National Alliance and the Democracy and Freedom party. The Islamic affairs commentator of the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Magdi Allam, wrote 'Before thinking about the Qur'an in

schools, we ought to be taking care to reaffirm Italy's national identity, meaning language, culture and shared values.' (*Guardian* 11.3.06)

Berlusconi's baby bonus scheme causes ripples

During the run-up to the general election in April, the then prime minister Silvio Berlusconi promised the electorate that should he come to power he would give Italian parents a 1000-euro bonus for each Italian child they produced. Two local authorities have responded to Berlusconi's proposals with opposing schemes.

For the local council of Barzago – a small council in the province of Lecco – Berlusconi's proposal was an 'injustice' which it was necessary to rectify. For this reason, they have launched a scheme specifically aimed at providing support for the first-born babies of non-Italian parents. Not far away, however, the local council of Morazzone has decided to set aside €500 for non-firstborn children, providing both their parents are of Italian nationality. There is also a special clause to exclude parents who have 'acquired Italian nationality' through naturalisation. (*il manifesto* 13.5.06)

NETHERLANDS

Security cited in burqa ban debate

The Dutch parliament has voted in favour of a proposal to ban the burqa outside the home – a proposal that was first put forward by Geert Wilders on the grounds that 'It's a medieval symbol, a symbol against woman'. Wilders linked the ban to the fight against terrorism. 'We have problems with a growing minority of Muslims who tend to have sympathy with the Islamo-fascistic concept of radical Islam', said Wilders.

Geert Wilders frames debate

Independent Conservative MP Geert Wilders first put forward a motion to ban the burqa in public, which is now supported by the two government parties, the Christian Democrats and the Liberal VVD as well as the List Pim Fortuyn. The immigration and integration minister Rita Verdonk had replied that while a general prohibition would probably be illegal, she would investigate whether it was possible to ban the burqa in specific circumstances such as education, healthcare and other times or places on security grounds. Government reform minister Alexander Pechtold has made it known that he is concerned about the proposal, particularly in light of the freedom of religion principle enshrined in the Constitution. (*BBC News* 16.1.06)

Welfare benefits may be cut for women who wear burqa

The Dutch Labour Party has proposed legislation that would allow the city to cut welfare payments to women who insisted on wearing a burqa if it could prove the full-body covering was the reason she could not find a job. The proposal was made after the Equality Commission ruling that a Muslim woman was discriminated against when she lost her job because she refused to shake hands with men at work. (*Spiegel Online* 21.4.06)

Equality Commission rules religious belief not a bar to teacher training

The Dutch Equal Treatment Commission found that the Regional Education Centre in the city of Utrecht acted illegally and 'discriminated indirectly, on the basis of religion' when it rejected Fatima Amghar for a teacher-training programme. Amghar, 20, said that her religious beliefs forbade her from having physical contact with men over the age of 12, and for this reason she would not shake hands with a man. The school rejected her application, arguing that shaking hands was routine for a teaching assistant in Dutch society. The Commission warned that schools risked excluding Muslim women from society unless they found a way to accommodate their beliefs. The Commission in 2005 ruled against an Islamic school for refusing to accept a Muslim woman for a teaching post because she refused to wear a headscarf. And in 2004, another Muslim woman won her case when she complained that she was barred from entering a restaurant in the Hague for wearing a headscarf. (*Associated Press* 28.3.06)

NORWAY

Niqab banned in state schools

Norway has become the third European country, after Sweden and France, to forbid the use of the niqab (which covers the whole face except the eyes) in schools. The Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education has supported Oslo City Council which first approved the measure on the grounds that the niqab was a hindrance to communication. It is believed that other municipalities will follow suit.

Fakhara Salimi, head of the MIRA Resource Centre for immigrant and refugee women stated 'Banning something that impinges on an individual's freedom is never good. Adult women over 16 should be able to choose for themselves.' She felt that seeing the eyes was sufficient for daily school communication. (*Islamic Human Rights Commission, Action Alert, 19.7.06, Aftenposten* www.aftenposten.no, as cited in *UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines* 21 June 2006)

SLOVAKIA

Incitement prosecution for leader of Slovak Togetherness

Marián Kotleba, a 29-year-old teacher and former leader of the banned extreme-Right Slovak Togetherness has been charged with inciting national, racial and ethnic hatred during a Slovak Radio (Sro) talk show broadcast on 27 May. During the talk show, Kotleba, who ran in parliamentary elections as a number two on the Slovak People's Party's (SL'S) list, said that the party aimed at a 'white Slovakia' and wanted to 'establish a segregated Slovak state based on Christian, national and social principles'. (*Slovak Spectator* 19.6.06)

In March 2006, Slovak Togetherness was banned by the Supreme Court on the grounds that it violated the

constitution of the Slovak Republic. It is the first time since the creation of the Slovak Republic that a political party has been banned. (Email letter from People Against Racism 2.3.06)

SPAIN

Islam should not be criminalised, say religious leaders

The Spanish Islamic Commission met with the interior minister and agreed to collaborate in the fight against terrorism. In return, it asked politicians to ensure that the Muslim community was not criminalised en masse and that Muslims were not stereotyped as Islamic terrorists.

Riay Tatari (president of the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain, UCIDE) and Mansur Escurdero (chief of the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religions Entities FEERI) said that they were concerned that the arrests of Muslims, supposedly linked with terrorism, who are later released without charge, affected innocent people who, as their names and photographs appeared in the media, had their lives destroyed. Tatari stressed that following the release of terror suspects the press failed to announce their innocence. (*Madrid Press* 23.1.06)

Islamophobic reactions to mosques and meeting houses causes concern

SOS Racismo has expressed concern about the growth of Islamophobia since September 11 which manifested itself in a 'growing level of suspicion and social rejection, especially in the setting up of new prayer houses and mosques'. The Justice Ministry is so concerned about the growing number of cases of discrimination against proposed Muslim meeting places that it is preparing an information campaign with the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces. According to the law on religious freedom, the local government has a legal obligation to provide land for places of worship.

Local authorities criticised

According to SOS Racismo spokeswoman, Nuria Vives, the attitude of local officials is central if hostility towards mosques and prayer houses is to be countered. 'If the mayor attends the opening of a mosque, there is less rejection, but sometimes that's not the case and they succumb to pressure from local residents. In the end, they put up hurdles so the mosque ends up in an industrial park or on the outskirts of town. This legitimises the position of those who oppose and helps discriminate against the Muslim community.' Ana Isabel Planet, a Justice Ministry advisor, reiterated this view, pointing out that 'According to the law of religious freedom, the city halls are required to do this, but they ignore it. Other times they simply say that they do not meet the conditions to be opened and deny the permits. The environment is quite hostile for minorities, not only for Muslims, but for evangelicals as well. It's easy to close down a mosque.' (*El País*, English language version 20.4.06)

Ceuta: investigation launched after carnival rewarded anti-Muslim song

After a public outcry, the Ministry of Festivities of Ceuta has announced that it will not release the prize money to the winner of the annual carnival association's song competition until an investigation has been launched. The winning song by the organisation Los Polluelos includes lyrics insulting Muslims who were described as 'animals' and 'bastards'. It also mocked the Adhan (call to prayer). The Democratic Party in Ceuta, which represents many Spanish Muslims of Moroccan origin was planning legal action against the festivities organisers, citing articles 510 and 525 of the penal code, which stipulate that whoever incites racial discrimination and derogates minorities is punished by imprisonment.

Initially, the head of the municipality announced that he would stand behind the festival's organisers and since the award was given by an independent and professional committee it would not be withdrawn. (*Islam Online* 8.3.06, *El País* 8.3.06)

Catalan Christian Democrat leader accused of views that 'verge on xenophobia'

The leader of Iniciativa per Catalunya (ICV), Joan Saura, has accused his Christian Democrat (CiU) counterpart of 'verging on xenophobia', and 'of being close to the extreme right' after Josep Antoni Duran Lleida opposed the right of non-EU immigrants to vote in local elections.

Right to vote in local elections challenged

The PSOE and the Green Left had put forward a bill that, if passed, would allow non-EU immigrants to vote in elections for the Generalitat, the autonomous government of Catalonia. Duran had demanded that, in order to be able to participate in the local elections, voters should have a 'knowledge of the Catalan language, culture and identity', thereby raising the question of 'tests for suitability'. Duran defended himself from accusations of xenophobia by stating that he was merely suggesting what was already being done in other European countries, such as the Netherlands and Germany. But in those countries, citizenship applicants, not voters, were tested on their language, knowledge etc. (*El País* 20.8.06)

Popular Party leader blames crime wave on foreigners

The secretary general of the Partido Popular (PP), Ángel Acebes, speaking at the start of the regional convention of the Valencian PP, made immigration a central theme, attacking the Socialist PSOE government for its programme of 'massive regularisation'. Acebes linked the alleged increasing crime wave – from house burglaries to violent assaults – to 'mainly' gangs of foreign criminals, who had taken advantage of the 'ease with which they could slip through the borders'. 'We need to speak the truth', he added, declaring that 'society must be informed every time more gangs of foreigners attempt criminal acts against property, against our integrity, and when they have come here to break the law'.

In response, PSOE organisational secretary, José Blanco, compared the way in which Acebes had tied the arrival of foreigners to increased acts of violence, to the rhetoric of Jean Marie Le Pen. United Left coordinator Gaspar Llamazares accused Acebes of racism and xenophobia when what was needed was 'cohesion and integration'. (*La Vanguardia* 28.5.06)

Huesca provincial mayor bans immigrants from town hall dinner

SOS Racismo has condemned Maria Teresa Font, (Aragonese Party, AP) mayor of the small town of Zaidin, in Huesca province, for banning foreign nationals from a 500-seat civic dinner. She said that only 'people born in Spain' could be admitted to the civic dinner at the end of the town's fiesta. Font told *El País* that 'Without some control, all the immigrants would sit down to eat and the villagers would be left outside.' Zaidin has a population of just 1,800, fourteen per cent of whom are immigrants, mainly Bulgarian and Ukrainians. A spokesperson for the AP condemned the mayor's actions which were not AP policy. (*Expatica News* 14.8.06)

Airport police accused of separating black and white passengers

In an article in *Libération* in January 2006, Magatte Mbengue, a 37-year-old freelance journalist who is a black French national of Senegalese origin, described how black people were separated from white passengers while in transit at Madrid's Barajas airport on a flight from Dakar to Paris in November 2005. After almost all the black passengers on the flight had their passports confiscated, she complained to an officer at the counter for border checks. Mbengue claims that she was then assaulted by up to four officers who at one point delivered a truncheon blow to her neck. (*Statewatch News Online* 3.8.06)

SWITZERLAND

Commission Against Racism highlights discrimination against Muslims

The Federal Commission Against Racism is concerned about anti-Islamic sentiment and has launched an appeal for tolerance and equal treatment of the 340,000 Muslims living in Switzerland. The Commission warns against stigmatising the entire Muslim community as collective 'scapegoats' for events taking place in other parts of the world.

The Commission highlights the fact that some Muslims – both men and women – are denied Swiss nationality because of their faith and states that no other minority faith is shown so little understanding over places where it can practise its religion. It also points out that prejudice makes it harder for young Muslims to find training opportunities and that there is confusion over the wearing of the veil, which some people have interpreted as a symbol of extremism. (*Swiss Info* 1.9.06)

The debate over minarets and the construction of mosques

The Federal Commission Against Racism has called on cantonal and communal authorities to show greater flexibility over building and zoning restrictions to allow the construction of religious buildings and to 'reduce populist pressures'. To date, there are only two minarets in Switzerland, at the Geneva and Zurich mosques. But plans to add minarets to mosques have run into strong opposition, some of

which seems to be orchestrated by the Swiss People's Party. The Federal Commission Against Racism points out that plans to build minarets have now been submitted at a number of locations, including Wangen near Olten in canton Solothurn, at Langenthal in canton Bern, at Wil in canton St Gallen, Wholen in canton Aargau and near Biel in canton Bern. (*Swiss Info* 8.2, 1. 3.9.06)

Canton Solothurn: Wangen district blocks minaret

The local authority in Wangen, a town of 4,700 inhabitants near Olten has blocked the construction of a six-metre high minaret as an addition to the building owned by the Olten Turkish cultural association following a campaign by the Swiss People's Party which had organised a petition against the proposed construction, warning of 'Islamic encroachment'.

The building commission says it vetoed the idea because the construction would take place in an industrial zone and a house of worship could only be in a public area. Although the local authority states that community pressure was ignored, the town's mayor had publicly stated that he was against the project, given public opinion.

Another campaign in canton Aargau

The authorities in Wohlen, canton Aargau, also turned down a request for a minaret. And the Muslim community in Biel has faced opposition to its project to build a centre in the nearby village of Nidau. (*Swiss Info* 8.2.06)

Basel: bishop offers tentative support

In an interview with the *Nzz am Sonntag* newspaper, The Catholic Bishop of Basel, Kurt Koch, said that, while he has nothing against Muslims building minarets in Switzerland, the current debate reflected a fear of things foreign. Koch said that it was difficult to judge whether fears were justified but good information could help overcome these fears. There was a danger that Islam could be equated with terror. He asked Muslim countries to respect the religious freedoms of Christians. (*Swiss Info* 3.9.06)

Justice minister censured for branding two Albanian asylum seekers 'criminals'

In July, a parliamentary committee strongly criticised the justice minister Christoph Blocher for a speech he made in January where he branded two asylum seekers as 'criminals' who had 'committed two murders'. The two men had in fact been cleared of criminal charges by the Swiss federal court and granted asylum in December 2006. Blocher, under pressure, apologised, but did not go far enough for the committee which concluded that Blocher lied to the Senate, violated the two men's presumption of innocence and undermined the separation of state powers. It urged the justice minister to show greater restraint in his criticisms of legal decisions concerning members of the public and to refrain from any comments that might be considered biased. (*Expatica News* 12.7.06)

UNITED KINGDOM

Gay humanist magazine slated for Islamophobic and xenophobic article

The chair of the Race Hate Crime Forum wrote to the CPS calling on it to prosecute the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (Galha) after it published an article in the Autumn 2005 edition of its magazine which described immigrants as 'criminals of the worst kind' and Islam as a 'barmy doctrine'. An article in the magazine described Islam as growing 'like a canker' in the UK through 'unrestrained and irresponsible breeding'. The magazine also published an article endorsing the rightwing populist Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and described immigrants as 'ill educated and culturally estranged Third Worlders'.

Magazine responds

Galha's executive committee said the magazine's editor and deputy editor had been forced to resign over the article and the magazine had now been relaunched under a new editorial team. However, secretary of Galha, George Broadhead, said that while he renounced the comments about immigrants, which could be 'regarded as potentially racist', he stood by remarks about Muslims and Islam. Mr Broadhead had written in the magazine 'What is wrong with being fearful of Islam? ... What does a moderate Muslim do, other than excuse the real nutters by adhering to this barmy doctrine.' A spokesperson for a support group for gay and lesbian Muslims said that the anti-Islamic views expressed by Galha were just the tip of the iceberg in the gay community. (*Guardian* 2.1.06)

Jilbab ruling

The House of Lords overturned a decision of the Court of Appeal and ruled that a school was justified in excluding a pupil for wearing a jilbab.

National security, anti-terrorist measures and civil rights

BELGIUM

Proscribed organisations and bans

Turkish DHKP-C supporters appeal against conviction

Seven members of the proscribed Turkish organisation DHKP-C have appealed against conviction for membership of a terrorist organisation. The trial judge said that Fehriye Erdal – who was sentenced in absentia to four years – and her co-accused DHKP-C defendants were fanatics, responsible for many deaths. Erdal disappeared before the court case, to the embarrassment of the government. (*Expatica News* 8.5.06)

The case of Bahar Kimyongür

The Belgian Committee for Liberty of Expression and Association (CLEA) has been formed to take up the case of Kimyongür, a member of the DHKC Information Bureau in Brussels, who has been sentenced to seven years for membership of a terrorist organisation. The Committee has the support of a number of professors, researchers and students of the Free University of Brussels, where Kimyongür studied until 1996. The Committee considers that Kimyongür, as a Belgian citizen, has committed no crime in Belgium, or in Turkey for that matter, and that his rights to freedom of expression have been violated. The only thing that Kimyongür could be accused of was translating DHKP texts and making public statements against the human rights abuses of the Turkish state.

The Turkish government is now seeking his extradition on the grounds that he is a member of a terrorist organisation. He is specifically accused of having interrupted a Turkish government minister at a meeting of the European parliament in 2000. CLEA drew attention to the manner of his arrest – on Dutch territory on 28 April. It seems that the Belgian state was aware that there was an extradition warrant against him but no action was taken until he left Belgian territory. (Campaign leaflet available at perso.wanadoo.fr/clea.be)

Confusion over issuing of visas to Hamas

The Israeli newspaper *Jerusalem Post* started a campaign to stop the visa request of Hamas member Mahmoud al-Ramahi who wanted to attend a parliamentary meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in Brussels. The Belgian consulate denied the visa request and now the Belgian government has demanded clear guidelines from the EU over the issuing of visas to Hamas members, as Hamas is on an EU list of terrorist organisations. (*Expatica News* 29.3.06)

European parliament intervenes

The European parliament asked the Belgian authorities to give 'entry visas for all persons that it would invite for meetings and events, on the grounds that they would come to be present on EU territory, not in Belgium'. The intervention came after the Cypriot MEP

Adamou Adamou, chair of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), had raised critical questions about the possibility of hosting a meeting in late 2006 with parliamentarians from Palestine. He criticised France and Belgium for denying Hamas deputies permission to attend the Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary assembly in March. (*EU Observer* 18.5.06)

CYPRUS

Proscribed organisations and bans

US State Department describes Cyprus as hub for PKK

A US State Department report on terrorism describes Cyprus as a haven for the PKK. It states that 'Cyprus forms a transit and support hub for various organisations operating in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant. The Kongra-Gel/PKK has an active presence in Cyprus on both sides of the buffer zone, which it reportedly uses as both a fundraising and transit point.' (*Cyprus Mail* 24.5.06)

DENMARK

Proscribed organisations and bans

Social Democrats expel councillor for supporting Tamil Tigers

Arulanantharajah Thillainadarasa, a city councillor in Herning, has been thrown out of the Social Democrats after revealing, during a news programme, that he supported the aims of the Tamil Tigers. Thillainadarasa said he was surprised by his expulsion. 'I support the Tamil Tigers, but I'm not a member. It's not a terror group, it's a welfare group that gives help to schools and health services.' (*Copenhagen Post* 15.3.06)

Anti-terrorist measures

First anti-terrorist prosecution for incitement

In the first prosecution using revamped anti-terror laws banning incitement to terror, Moroccan-born Said Mansour has been charged with inciting terrorism via the production and distribution of material glorifying holy war against the west. A police search of his home led to the confiscation of videos, CD-Roms and other material promoting jihad. There are also allegations that Mansour distributed bomb-making manuals. Mansour has pleaded not guilty to the charges and claims the arrest is persecution of a 'missionary Muslim'. He argues that the confiscated material is freely available on the internet. (*Copenhagen Post* 17.8.06)

Expulsion

Deputy prime minister calls for expulsion of radical imams

In the wake of the 'cartoon affair', deputy Prime Minister Bendt Bendsten called for the expulsion of 'radical' imams from Denmark. In Denmark, citizenship can only be withdrawn under special circumstances, such as committing espionage that endangers the nation's security or terrorist acts against the state.

The case of imam Ahmad Akkari

Bendsten's statements were made in clear reference to an incident involving imam Ahmad Akkari and the Syrian-born MP Naser Khader (a controversial figure within the Muslim community) during a break in an interview with a French TV channel. Unknown to Akkari, the cameraman continued to film their discussion. He was then shown on TV stating (of Khader) 'If he becomes minister for immigration or integration, shouldn't we send two guys to blow him and his ministry up?' The imam, who has Danish citizenship, said that what he said was 'nothing but a joke, I did not expect that they would be taken seriously'. 'We have to watch our words even while joking from now on as some are lurking in the bush', he added.

DPP proposes treason charges for imams

Pia Kjaersgaard has called for members of a delegation of Danish imams (including Ahmad Akkari) who went to the Middle East to rally support against the government for not censuring the paper that published the Mohammed cartoons, to be tried with treason and have their residence permits rescinded. She claimed that the imams, who should sign a declaration of loyalty towards Denmark, travelled throughout the Arab world spreading lies and half-truths about the country. The imams have sued Kjaersgaard for libel. (*Islam Online* 24.3.06)

EU

Anti-terrorist measures

EU introduces new counter-terrorism package

Following arrests in the UK in August linked to an alleged plot to blow up transatlantic airliners, European interior ministers, meeting in London, announced a six-point programme to counter terror. The measures include: the introduction of positive profiling and the provision of advance passenger data; the creation of a new legal framework against internet sites that incite terrorism and detail bomb-making techniques (satellite channels that propagate extremism will also be examined); and further measures to curb radicalisation and recruitment among Europe's Muslim communities. Critics claim the measures accelerate the drive to build a surveillance infrastructure unparalleled in the free world.

Positive profiling/provision of advance passenger lists

EU ministers want airlines to provide advance passenger lists for all flights inside Europe as well as in and out of Europe, including domestic routes. These will be checked against the 'biometric identifier' – electronic eye scan or fingerprint – in the passenger's passport or identity card when they check in. Under the system whereby airlines would provide advance passenger lists, names could be checked against watchlists for terror suspects and wanted criminals. A 'profiling system' of those worthy of further scrutiny would also be developed. Police say a combination of operational expertise, specific intelligence and historical analysis will be used to build up pictures of suspect passengers. A more targeted approach would be developed, which would reduce the likelihood of innocent travellers being stopped and incorrect intelligence reports filed.

Tackling radicalisation

The counter terrorism measures also include support for the development of the idea of a 'European Islam' and a Europe-wide drive to engage with moderate and democratic Islamist organisations. But the move to create a 'European Islam' was immediately attacked by Ahmed Versi, editor of the *Muslim News* in the UK. 'Talks about creating a "European Islam" not only indicates that the EU is planning to impose their own version of Islam on Muslims, but will create more anti-Western and anti-Christian feeling in the Muslim community.' (*Guardian* 17.8.06)

Racial profiling

Is positive profiling different from racial profiling?

The new counter-terror measures include the introduction of a system for the 'positive profiling' of European airline passengers, with a directive expected by the Autumn. Home secretary John Reid said that the new system would not involve screening by religion or ethnic background but would be carried out well in advance of flights – based on biometric checks (electronic eye or facial scans or fingerprints) in the passenger's passport or identity card when they check in.

Disguised racial profiling

One of the problems with 'positive profiling' is that no-one is clear as to what this phrase means. This, and the fact that some European countries, particularly France and the Netherlands, want to go much further and introduce explicit checks on Muslim travellers, is fueling concern that positive profiling is a disguised way of racial profiling. (*Guardian* 17.8.06)

Torture

Diplomatic assurances legitimise torture, say NGOs

In a joint submission to the Council of Europe, Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists and AI have urged member states to flatly reject any proposals to establish standards for the use of diplomatic assurances on transfers of people to risk of torture. It came as the Council of Europe was meeting to consider an initiative to elaborate 'minimum require-

ments' for reliance on diplomatic assurances. 'Governments shouldn't cloak diplomatic assurances with the legitimacy that they don't deserve by creating standards for their use', said Jill Heine of AI. (Human Rights Watch, Press Release, 7.12.05)

Proscribed organisations

Tamil Tigers added to EU list

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), has been added to the EU list of proscribed organisations. In October 2005, the EU imposed a travel ban on the organisation which had already been proscribed in the UK, US, Canada and India. (*EU Observer* 18.5.06)

FRANCE

Torture

Investigation launched after new claims that Islamists were tortured

Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy has launched an investigation after the publication of a book by three journalists from the news magazine *Le Point*, which included accounts by five former police officers of the torture of terrorist suspects arrested after a wave of bombings in France by radical Islamists in the 1990s. Terror suspects in custody in Paris and Lyon, it is claimed in the book 'Place Beauvau' (named after the interior ministry's headquarters), were beaten and given electric shocks, with one suspect dangled out of a sixth-floor window. (*BBC News* 13.2.06)

Racial profiling

French intelligence services profile 'gang leaders' by ethnicity

SOS Racisme has lodged a complaint with civil action proceedings for the alleged profiling by the French intelligence services of 'gang leaders' in 'sensitive suburbs' according to ethnic criteria. An article in *Le Monde* on 25 February first drew attention to the fact that les Renseignements Généraux (RG) was gathering information about the ethnic origin of 436 gang leaders in twenty-four 'sensitive' areas and had established that 87 per cent of those 'leaders' held French nationality, among which 67 per cent were of Maghrebi origin and 17 per cent of [sub-Saharan] African origin. According to SOS Racisme, not only had some of the information been gleaned from a number of extreme-right groups and websites, but profiling along ethnic lines was expressly forbidden in the penal code.

There is to be a legal inquiry. The interior ministry has not denied the existence of the RG's report. (*Nouvel Observateur* 23.8.06)

Proscribed organisations and bans

Black radical organisation outlawed under Laval law

In July, the Council of Ministers announced that the KA Tribe (la Tribu KA), a black extremist group, would be disbanded in accordance with the Laval law of 10 January 1936 'in relation to combat groups and private militia'. Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy said that 'The behaviour of this tribe and its members is particular shocking' citing its anti-Semitism and particularly an incident on Rue des Rosiers and 'in certain other places where they have run wild'.

Background to proscription

The KA Tribe was formed in 2004, and is led by 25-year-old Kémi Séba, whose real name is Stellia Capo-Chichi. It is supposed to have around fifty members, although intelligence sources claim membership is between fifteen and thirty. Sarkozy justified its proscription with reference to incidents on the 29 May, on Rue des Rosiers, in the heart of the Jewish area of Paris. Around twenty members of the group had gone looking for members of the Jewish Defence League and Betar – two Jewish extremist groups that the KA Tribe had blamed for taking part in 'Black bashings' on the fringes of a demonstration in memory of Ilan Halimi. According to Benjamin Abtan, chair of the Union of French Jewish Students, the KA Tribe had a 'reverse Nazi' ideology, which claimed Black supremacy. But while Mouloud Aounit of MRAP welcomed the decision to ban KA Tribe, he called for the same action to be taken against the Jewish Defence League (LDJ), which is 'considered to be a terrorist organisation in the United States, and is banned in Israel'.

KA Tribe vow to fight on

Previously, KA Tribe leader Kémi Séba had told *nouvelobs.com* that the KA Tribe would take no notice of the decision 'which is against people who are fighting for their people'. (*Le Monde* 26, 27.06, *Nouvel Observateur* 26.7.06)

Speech crimes

Rapper prosecuted for anti-French lyrics

Following an action by Daniel Mach, UMP MP for Pyrénées-Orientales, over the album *Politikment Incorrekt*, the French popular rapper Monsieur R (Richard Makela) has been charged with offending public decency with a song in which he referred to France as a 'bitch' and a 'slut' and vowed to 'piss' on Napoleon and Charles de Gaulle. Some 152 MPs and 49 senators had demanded that parliament act against Makela's lyrics before Mach took a personal action against him for making and disseminating 'violent and pornographic messages' to which minors could get access. According to Makela, he was not targeting any particular group but merely rapping against the 'system'. 'You can have a critical view of the French state without being anti-French or racist.' (*Guardian* 29.5.06)

GERMANY

Anti-terror laws and measures

Anti-terrorist laws broadened to include non-terror suspects

The parliament has agreed to broaden anti-terror laws passed in early 2001 so that they will in future have consequences for individuals who may belong to extremist organisations, but are not suspected of terror crimes. In future, scans of information databases will not be confined to terror suspects, but will also include rightwing extremists and 'militant Islamists such as hate preachers operating in Germany'. In addition, the foreign intelligence service, BND, will have wider access to domestic police databases. (*Deutsche Welle* 6.7.06)

Centralised database on terror suspects created following failed bomb attempt

Following a failed attempt to blow up passenger trains in the west of the country, in the cities of Hamm and Koblenz, a centralised database for terrorist suspects – a controversial measure which has been under discussion for five years – has been agreed.

In the attempt, homemade bombs which failed to explode were planted on the trains in suitcases. Two young Lebanese men who had been living in Germany were arrested in connection with the plot. One of them turned himself in to police in Lebanon. Sixteen organisations, including the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, issued a joint statement saying they were 'deeply shocked and horrified'. The statement followed a call by interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble for Muslims to condemn the plot. (*Islam Online* 26.8.06)

Imprisonment for foreigners suspected of 'proximity' to terrorists

Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU), the new German interior minister, has proposed modifications to his predecessor, Otto Schily's plan to imprison foreigners regarded as 'dangerous', even if they have not committed any actual offence.

Under immigration law, when there are well-founded grounds for suspecting an individual of proximity to terrorist activities, s/he can be deported. Schäuble proposed that the same grounds should form the basis for criminal proceedings as well. The argument was that a dangerous individual would be less of a threat to Germany behind bars than if abroad, where they could continue plotting. The SPD opposes the idea. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 17.12.05)

More states back electronic tagging

Günther Beckstein, Bavaria's interior minister (and chairperson of Germany's committee of interior ministers) has said that foreigners regarded as dangerous, but who cannot be deported because of a risk of torture or the death penalty in their home countries, should be imprisoned or electronically tagged, and that the immigration law should be changed to allow this.

The interior ministers of Lower Saxony and Hesse also want to introduce electronic tagging of 'Islamists'. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 16.1.06)

Hamburg: new measures target mosques

Hamburg's senate has put forward a plan for improved sharing of information among authorities in order to combat terrorism. In future, building inspectors should inform the security authorities of the building plans of Islamist organisations, and the Office for the Defence of the Constitution should inform tax offices about Islamist organisations so that their charitable status can be checked. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 22.3.06)

Proscribed organisations

Hamas minister travels to Germany

After Sweden granted a visa to the Palestinian minister for refugees, Atef Udwan, a member of Hamas travelled to Germany where he met with Social Democrat and Free Democratic Party MPs. Chancellor Angela Merkel said the visit was 'annoying' and a spokesperson for her office said that Udwan was 'unwanted' in the country. A letter of protest was sent to the Swedish prime minister, saying that Udwan should not have been granted a Schengen visa. (*EU Observer* 18.5.06, *Deutsche Welle* 18.5.06)

Prosecutions against banned PKK activists

The German public prosecutor's office has charged 36-year old Halil D., a suspected high official of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), with being a ringleader of a criminal organisation. The prosecutor's office said on 17 March that D., who lived in Darmstadt from 2000 until his arrest in October 2005, was responsible for the PKK's party finances in Germany. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.3.06)

The German federal public prosecutor is bringing charges against two alleged leading officials of the banned PKK for their involvement in the party. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.8.05)

Taylan Sarigül, a 28-year old Kurd, was convicted on 16 June 2005 of 'membership of a criminal organisation' for having allegedly been leader of the PKK in Darmstadt and Mainz from September 2003 to June 2004. Despite having an asylum application pending, he was forcibly taken to the Turkish consulate, where he refused to sign documents for leaving Germany. (*Junge Welt* 29.6.05)

Former interior minister rebuked over ban on PKK-linked newspaper

The federal administrative court in Leipzig said that the outgoing minister of the interior, Otto Schily, had gone too far when he banned the Turkish-language daily newspaper *Özgür Politika* (Free Politics) that is published in Frankfurt-on-the-Main. On 5 September 2005, 300 police searched the paper's editorial offices and the homes of many of its staff. Lorry loads of archives, PCs and thousands of books were confiscated, as well as journalists' private property. Schily justified the measures on the grounds that the paper was integrated into the structures of the PKK, banned in Germany since 1993. However, Free Politics has been published for some ten years, which suggests that the episode may have been designed to present Schily as a strong law-and-order man in the run-up to the national elections. The court has now found that no public interest would be served by immediate implementation of the ban

because the appeal against it by the Kurdish journalists 'can be expected to be successful'. Immediately after the raid, the German Union of Journalists criticised Schily's action and demanded that he treat freedom of the press with greater respect. (*Junge Welt* 21.10.05)

Banned Caliphate State supporters raided

In a raid against supporters of the banned Islamist organisation 'The Caliphate State', police searched a mosque and twenty-five homes and business premises. The focus of the police operation was the Ingolstadt region and Schwabach in central Franconia. Munich public prosecutor Martin Hofmann announced that twenty-one people were suspected of membership of the organisation or of supporting its continuation. He said that numerous documents and insignia of the 'Caliphate State' had been confiscated and that 'the suspicion that the "Caliphate State" continues to operate has hardened.' According to the police, the twenty-one suspects had rented a room of the 'Ingolstadt Islamic Centre' – an organisation that has also been banned – as a place of prayer. Since then the premises had been visited regularly by former members of the 'Caliphate State'.

Then interior minister Otto Schily banned the radical Islamist 'Caliphate State' at the end of 2001. The organisation's founder, Metin Kaplan, was expelled from Germany in October 2004 and was sentenced to life imprisonment in Turkey a few months later. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 24.11.05)

Bavaria: Muslim organisation, cited as centre for preachers of hate, closed

On 28 December 2005, the Bavarian authorities banned the organisation 'Ulm Multi-Culture House' in Neu Ulm and the premises belonging to it were confiscated. Bavaria's interior minister, Günther Beckstein, said that through the ban Bavaria was drawing a clear boundary to adherents of extremist organisations of foreigners. 'We will not tolerate organisations here that direct themselves in an aggressive and combative manner against the constitutional order and the idea of understanding among peoples, and in doing so openly call for the use of violence.' The grounds given for the ban by the interior ministry was that the organisation's activity endangered the peaceful coexistence of Germans and foreigners. The ministry said the organisation's aims were incompatible with the basic values of a state order that respected human dignity. Muslim 'preachers of hate' at the centre were alleged to have called for 'holy war'.

Extraordinary rendition victim linked to centre

The last time the 'Multi-Culture House' was in the headlines was in connection with Khaled el-Masri, the German-Lebanese man kidnapped by the CIA. El-Masri has said that during interrogation in Afghanistan he was thoroughly questioned on possible links to Islamists in Neu Ulm. Neu Ulm is regarded as a centre of Islamist activity. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 27, 29.12.05)

Expulsion

Frankfurt: attempted expulsion of Milli Görus activist

The municipality of Frankfurt has decreed the expulsion from the country of an official of the Milli Görus community. While Milli Görus is not a proscribed organisation, it is unconstitutional and its activities are monitored by the state.

The 32-year old Turkish man's presence in Germany represented a danger, said Heiko Kleinsteuber, deputy head of the Aliens Office. The basis for the decision was the assessment of the Office for the Defence of the Constitution that, although Milli Görus presented itself outwardly as willing to engage in dialogue, internally it agitated against democratic western values. Kleinsteuber said that the municipality of Frankfurt was examining about ten similar cases. The Turkish man, who had lived in Germany since 1997 and whose wife and two children are German, intended to take legal steps against his expulsion. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.8.05)

More expulsions in Bavaria

Günther Beckstein (CSU), interior minister of Bavaria, said on 3 August 2005 that Bavaria planned to deport thirty-seven Islamists in the near future. He added that in the prior six months, fifteen suspected supporters of terror had already been deported. Beckstein criticised the fact that it was often not possible to place potential terrorists in temporary preventive detention. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 4.8.05)

Hesse: Afghan 'preacher of hate' to be deported

On 21 February 2006, the Frankfurt administrative court ruled that Said Khobaib Sadat, a suspected 'preacher of hate' living in Offenbach-am-Main, could be deported to Afghanistan. He was considered a follower of warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and in sermons at a Frankfurt mosque he was alleged to have called for 'holy war'. The court ruled that increasing political stabilisation in his home country meant that he would not be at risk. An appeal was launched. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 22.2.06)

Legal defence

Lawyers said the accusations against Said Khobaib Sadat were fabricated by Afghanistan's powerful enemies among the mujaheddin. During the Taliban era he criticised the Taliban before a great assembly for their 'inhuman policies', while in the 1980s he provided the Communist regime with information about the mujaheddin that cost several members their lives. Lawyers argued that for that reason their client could not return.

Some of the evidence against him seems to be based on a TV programme, 'Report Mainz', which quoted Sadat as saying in a sermon 'We must defend our faith against the unbelievers even if to do so we have to die as martyrs'. Sadat claimed that this speech was mistranslated by the TV programme. But Frankfurt public prosecutor's office considered it proven that in front of his congregation he called out 'Death to the USA and Great Britain! May God destroy all enemies of Islam and of Afghanistan.' Even so, he was never charged with incitement for this statement, and a criminal investigation

was halted. This in turn led the Aliens Office of the town of Offenbach to suspend immediate implementation of the expulsion order against him, and they were waiting for the outcome of the proceedings in the Frankfurt administrative court in which he was contesting his expulsion. However, reaching a conclusive verdict may take years, since the decision of the Frankfurt court can be appealed against in the administrative court in Kassel. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 27.1.06)

Bremen rebuked for expulsion of Egyptian imam

A local administrative court has found that the municipality of Bremen was unjustified in expelling an alleged 'preacher of hate'. Bremen's senator for interior affairs, Thomas Röwekamp (CDU), thereupon announced that an appeal would be lodged against the decision, stating that the new anti-terrorism laws were supposed to make it easier to expel 'preachers of hate'.

Details of case

The Aliens Office had issued the expulsion order, on suspicion of conducting sermons of hate, against the Egyptian imam of the Bremen mosque while he was on holiday in his native country. A spokesperson of the administrative court said that the expulsion had been found to be illegal because the imam had not called for any acts of violence. Nonetheless, the man could not yet re-enter Germany because, during the course of fighting his case, his residence permit had expired. He had previously tried in vain to obtain permission to return to Bremen at least for the court proceedings, in order to be able to defend himself personally. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 2.11.05)

Speech crimes

Berlin bans images of Hizbollah leader

The city of Berlin has banned the display of images of Hizbollah leader Sheikh Nasrallah following an anti-Israel demonstration. Berlin's senator of the interior Erhart Körting said that the ban was based on Nasrallah's goal of destroying the state of Israel. The Berlin section of the Federal Agency for Internal Security stated that there were about 160 Hizbollah members in Berlin and about 900 in Germany overall. Körting claimed that the ban did not infringe freedom of speech or rights of assembly. In fact, he said, promoting Hizbollah amounted to disturbing the peace. (*Jewish Chronicle* 11.8.06)

Racial profiling

Targeting Arabs is illegal, rules court

The Federal Constitutional Court ruled in May 2006 that dragnet searches for terrorists, which targeted Arabs in Germany after September 11, were unconstitutional, as a 'general threat situation ... cannot justify a dragnet search'. The ruling will force seven of Germany's sixteen states to review their police laws.

Moroccan students brings test case

The verdict came after a Moroccan student, whose name has not been disclosed, brought a case after September 11 which highlighted the nationwide police search which

targeted male students in Germany, aged 18 to 40 years old, who were Muslims and from Arab countries. The use of databases such as university enrolment lists to carry out dragnet operations was also highlighted. During the post-September 11 dragnet more than 8 million data records were checked by police in their search for possible terrorists.

Data trawling linked to stigmatisation

The ruling stated that police data trawling of certain types of people could 'reinforce prejudices and stigmatise the affected social groups in the perception of the public'. It did however leave room for exceptions, but under strict condition that there was an 'existence of further facts pointing to a concrete danger, such as the preparation or commission of terrorist attacks.'

Criticism of ruling

Bavaria's interior minister Günther Beckstein described the verdict as a 'black day for the effective combating of terrorism in Germany'. 'We cannot understand why the courts keep putting more and more limits on the ability of security forces to take action to protect the public from catastrophic attacks', said Konrad Freiberg, head of the GdP police trades union. Last February, the Federal Constitutional Court struck down a law which would have allowed German air force jets to shoot down any hijacked plane which terrorists were seeking to use for attacks similar to those in the US. The court ruled it was unconstitutional for the state to order the death of innocent hostages on such an aircraft. (*Expatica News* 23.5.06, *Islam Online* 24.5.06)

Lower Saxony: targeting of Muslim neighbourhoods

Police in Lower Saxony have been carrying out checks, based on suspicion alone, on individuals and vehicles in order to combat terrorism. They have so far checked 14,000 people since 2003 in the neighbourhoods of mosques and Islamic cultural facilities, according to Lower Saxony's interior minister Uwe Schünemann. During this period, eleven statewide checks were carried out. In addition there were numerous decentralised checks over a period of fifteen weeks. In addition, 6,000 vehicles were checked. One person was found who was suspected of supporting the Caliphate State. In addition, Schünemann said, sixteen wanted people were found, ten of whom had failed to pay fines. A further twenty-four people were detained, fifteen of them for infringements of the law on foreigners and asylum. Schünemann said the checks did not reflect any general suspicion of Muslims. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 25.10.05)

Anti-terrorist operations

More dragnet controls in Schleswig-Holstein

The government of the state of Schleswig-Holstein has tightened its law on policing. It is introducing dragnet controls (special random checks and investigations), making it easier to tap telephones, installing CCTV on squares and extending the powers of the police. The state's interior minister Ralf Stegner (SPD) said in justification of the measures: 'We need an appropriate response to the continuing threat of international terrorism.' (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 2.11.05)

Police raids at Frankfurt railway station

In a raid in Frankfurt's railway station district aimed at alleged Islamists, several hundred police officers stormed into the area, blocked off a street and carried out checks on almost 300 people. Even experienced police officers said unofficially that the operation, ordered by Hesse's interior minister Volker Bouffier, was a matter of action for action's sake – the citizens are afraid of terrorism, so we'll show them that the police are not powerless. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 28, 30.9.05)

Death in custody

Death of Pakistani student in police custody leads to demonstrations in Pakistan

A Pakistani student died in the custody of German police after being arrested on March 20 trying to enter the building of Axel Springer publishing house, the publisher of *Die Welt* newspaper in Berlin. *Die Welt* had published the controversial Danish cartoons and Aamir Cheema, a student at the University of Applied Sciences in the Bavarian city of Muenchberg, had been accused of planning to attack the paper's editor.

The death caused a furore in Pakistan, where religious organisations staged demonstrations and banned the German flag. There were demonstrations in various cities where Cheema was described as a martyr. The police claimed Cheema committed suicide. He was found dead in his cell having hanged himself with his own clothes. His body had been flown to Pakistan where a provincial government minister officially received it. An official team from the Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency was sent to Berlin to investigate the cause of the death. It asked the German government to explain its failure to provide proper care after ascertaining that Cheema had psychological problems and could therefore be a suicide risk. (*Islam Online* 14.5.06)

GREECE

Anti-terrorist operations

Anger over state 'abductions' of Pakistani migrants gathers force

In December 2005, the magazine *Proto Thema* broke the story of the abduction by Greek intelligence services of twenty-eight Pakistani men and named the British MI6 head of station in Athens as well as fifteen Greek state intelligence (EYP) agents. Since then, a parliamentary committee has established more facts. There have been calls for the former Public Order minister, George Voulgarakis to resign from his current Cabinet post.

Details of earlier police raids

MI6 sent a request to Athens to investigate individuals suspected of involvement in the 7 July 2005 attacks in the UK. As a result, in July and August 2005, 5,432 immigrants were 'questioned', 2,172 were 'probed', 1,221 were arrested for 'other reasons' and six were deported. The massive sweep across Greece was carried

out by over 1,000 law enforcement units including state security, immigration and counter-terrorism officers.

This information was given by the public order minister to the parliamentary Committee on Public Order and Justice.

Abductions of Pakistani men

The most serious allegations relate to the abduction of twenty-eight Pakistani men, held in secret houses, questioned and subjected to violence. None of these men were questioned as part of the police swoop above – the abductions formed part of an intelligence operation and were therefore not a matter for police. Tony Bunyan, editor of *Statewatch*, said that the confirmation that the twenty-eight men were not part of the massive police sweep last summer was significant. 'It was clearly a separate intelligence agency operation carried out by EFY at the behest of MI6. If they had been arrested the questioning would have taken place at police stations where they would have had the right to legal advice and regular meals ... They were not arrested but abducted by intelligence agencies, held incommunicado in secret houses, denied legal advice, and in a number of cases suffered abuse and ill treatment.'

The men were seized by plain-clothed security agents – probably from the Greek national intelligence service, EYP – from Athens, and from Oinofyta and Ioannina to the North. One eyewitness said of seven of the men from Ioannina 'one minute they were working on the farm then they disappeared for a week.'

The *Athens News* interviewed Gul Nawaz, Mohammed Nazir and Mohammed Munir abducted from their homes in Petralona, Athens. They were driven (blindfolded) to a house where they were interrogated (and beaten), fed once a day and slept on the floor for between two to six days before being released. In January, three of those detained spoke at length publicly for the first time. Mohammed Munir, 35, said he was repeatedly beaten and now lives in fear. He was released after six days. 'When they let us go they told us not to talk. They said that if we did they would slit our throats.' He was arrested in Athens around 16,17 July.

In July 2005, the men officially lodged complaints and in September the prosecutor ordered an investigation, which was started in December 2005. The Pakistani community in Greece is supporting the men in their case against the government but lawyers for the men say they have been placed under great pressure from the Pakistani Embassy to withdraw their complaints.

Cooperation with British MI6

A Greek magazine, *Proto Thema*, has named a British intelligence officer it claims was present at some of the interrogations. The government has asked editors not to publish the name of the MI6 chief in Athens, identified in *Proto Thema*. Minister Anastasios Papaligouras said that law enforcement cooperation with the UK was based on a 1961 law providing for the exchange of evidence and court records.

It is believed that British intelligence tracked a call from England to a mobile phone in Joannina and asked Greek authorities to investigate. Greek police or agents detained Pakistani men and went through the numbers stored on their mobile phones, which led to more arrests. (*Statewatch News Online* January 2006, *Guardian* 4.1.06)

Calls for minister's resignation

The Socialist party has called for the resignation of Giorgos Voulgarakis who held the public order portfolio at the time of the arrests. Prosecutor Nikos Degatis has filed abduction charges against 'persons unknown' after establishing that the abductions took place, but not who carried them out. (Independent 13.5.06)

IRELAND

Proscribed organisations and bans

Money transfer led to terror scare

Somali-born Irishman Mohamed Haji Hassan has been awarded £4,000 in compensation by the Equality Authority after an investigation by the Equality Tribunal revealed that American multinational Western Union indirectly discriminated against him on the basis of religion. This makes Mr Hassan the first person in Ireland to be officially discriminated against on the grounds of religion because of his name.

The case of Mohamed Haji Hassan

The self-employed businessman and former coordinator of the Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland, who lives in Dublin, was granted full Irish citizenship in 2000 and was trying to set up his own language translation business when he ran short of cash in October 2002 and needed to borrow money to pay off a phone bill. His UK-based sister arranged to transfer him money through Western Union. After various delays, he was told that he could not access the money unless he provided the company with his passport number that would be forwarded to the FBI. He later learned that his name had been red-flagged by the US company because it is similar to that of a former Taliban minister who is wanted in the US for terrorism. Mr Hassan, terrified that he would end up in Guantánamo Bay, refused to hand over his Irish passport number and took his case to the Equality Authority. Western Union's defence was that it is required under US law to screen the names of anyone using the service against lists of individuals and organisations associated with terrorism and other illegal activity. (Irish Independent 16.3.06)

ITALY

Extraordinary rendition

Arrests and prosecutions in Abu Omar case

The prime minister Romano Prodi has been asked by prosecutors to seek the extradition of twenty-six CIA agents from the US so that they can be put on trial for the kidnapping in July 2003 of the Muslim cleric Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr who was suspected of recruiting Islamic terrorists. The request followed the brief detention in July of Mauro Mancini the deputy head of Italy's military intelligence service, Sismi, accused of helping the CIA seize the

'terror suspect', who was sent to a third country, where he was tortured. Another official, who was head of the agency's operations in northern Italy during the alleged CIA operation, was put under house arrest. The prosecutor's office confirmed that arrest warrants had been obtained for twenty-six Americans said to have taken part in the alleged kidnappings – three were said to be CIA agents while a fourth worked at the US-Italian air base at Aviano, near Venice. Judicial sources later confirmed that the wanted men and women included a former head of the CIA in Italy, named as Jeff Castelli. The prosecutor, Armando Spataro, had previously issued a request for the Americans allegedly involved but the (then) government of Silvio Berlusconi refused to pass it on to the US. Mr Spataro said that he would re-submit his petition to Italy's new center-left administration.

Italian complicity in extraordinary rendition

The case of Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr (known as Abu Omar) represents the first official confirmation of European complicity in the US's controversial policy of so-called extraordinary rendition. Eyewitnesses have testified that Abu Omar, who was a refugee and former imam of a Milan mosque, was stopped on a Milan street and bundled into a van. In a subsequent call to Italy, monitored by police, he said he had been flown to Egypt, jailed, tortured and then released.

The case unfolds

The true facts about the case have been a long time unfolding. Berlusconi had vigorously denied any government involvement in the affair, as had Sismi's director, Nicolo Pollari, in evidence to an Italian parliamentary committee and the European parliament. But in May, a Carabinieri warrant officer was placed on the list of suspects. According to media reports, he had admitted stopping Abu Omar and demanding to see his papers seconds before the cleric was seized. New evidence continues to surface suggesting that this was a joint US-Italian intelligence operation and that Abu Omar's abduction had been authorised at a high level while Berlusconi was in office.

Until recently, the whereabouts of the Cleric were unknown. But, on July 6, his lawyer Montasser el-Zayyat told Reuters that his client would travel to Italy within two weeks to file a case with Italian courts. He is seeking 10 million in damages for abduction. (Guardian 6, 22.7.06, Islam Online 6.7.06)

Anti-terrorist operations

British airliner plot leads to raids and expulsions

Following the British anti-terrorist swoops in the alleged transnational airliner plot, Italian police, targeting Islamic groups in Milan, Rome, Venice, Florence, Naples and other cities, arrested forty people in raids on 'Islamic gathering places such as call centers, internet points and money transfer offices'. None of those detained was charged with terrorism-related offences. Twenty-eight people were detained for violating rules on residency permits and twelve for property crimes. A further 114 immigrants were expelled as part of the same operation. In a joint operation with Belgian police probing suspected funding of an alleged terrorist operation, police searched the houses of fifteen foreigners. (Reuters 12.8.06)

NETHERLANDS

Proscribed organisations and bans

PKK activist Nuriye Kesbir released

On 20 January 2005, Kurdish politician Nuriye Kesbir was released – over three years after being detained in the Netherlands. The Supreme Court in the Hague confirmed the findings of lower courts that Turkish assurances that she would receive a fair trial in Turkey were inadequate. The Turkish judiciary demanded the extradition of Kesbir, who is charged with participation in twenty-five guerrilla operations. Jan Piet Donner, the Dutch minister of justice, had supported Kesbir's extradition. The Supreme Court found that, despite Turkey's progress in respecting human rights, Kesbir would be at risk of torture if handed over to the Turkish authorities. However, the court did not rule out the possibility of Kesbir being handed over if the Turkish government were to provide concrete guarantees that she would not be at risk of torture. Kesbir has not been granted official asylum in the Netherlands. (*Junge Welt* 22.1.05)

Kurdistan People's Congress members targeted

The Dutch police are taking stronger measures against members of Kongra-Gel, the Kurdistan People's Congress. For example, on 20 January 2005, the Dutch chief public prosecutor announced the arrest of two Kongra-Gel cadres for alleged extortion of protection money, while a third was arrested in Germany at the request of the Dutch judiciary. And already in November 2004, the Dutch police described a raid they conducted on a Kurdish youth culture camp as a 'blow against terrorism'. (*Junge Welt* 22.1.05)

Expulsion

Terrorist suspects deemed undesirable aliens and deported

The number of foreigners denied residence in the Netherlands as undesirable aliens has more than doubled since 2000. The news programme 'Nova' reported that immigration and integration minister Rita Verdonk declared thirty terrorist suspects to be undesirable aliens in the last 18 months. Sixteen of these were deported, while fourteen left the country and were banned from returning. It is claimed that the powers were used mainly against suspected criminals, though they were increasingly being applied to cases where a foreign resident is believed to have links with terrorism.

Increased use of deportations

A special unit within the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) has existed since 2004 to deport people with suspected links to terrorism. It has dealt with a known 30 cases. Ten of the suspects were Algerian, six Moroccan and nine Asian. Four were suspected members of the Dutch-Muslim terror 'Hofstad' group. (*Expatica News* 5.4.06)

NORWAY

Proscribed organisations and bans

Norway withdraws from EU proscribed organisations list

The government has decided that it will no longer align itself with any proscribed organisations list other than that published by the UN. 'The reason for this decision is that a continued alignment with the EU list could cause difficulties for Norway in its role as neutral facilitator in certain peace processes.' (Royal ministry of foreign affairs, press release 5.1.06)

Hamas deputy granted visa

The Norwegian Immigration Directorate granted a visa to a Palestinian representative, thought to be Yayha el-Baradei. A second application from Hamas representative, Salah-el-Bardawil (previously granted permission to enter France) was being considered. Both men had been invited by the Norwegian Palestine Committee. The Progress party had criticised the granting of the visa on the grounds that Hamas supports terrorism. (*Norway Post* 17.5.06)

US reacts to Left Party's Israel boycott stance

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice threatened Norway with 'serious political consequences' after finance minister and Socialist Left Party leader Kristin Halvorsen admitted supporting a boycott of Israeli goods. This message was apparently given to the Norwegian Embassy in Washington DC, according to the newspaper *VG*, which also claimed that two classified reports promised a 'tougher climate' between the USA and Norway if Halvorsen's remarks were found to represent the foreign policy of the new red-green alliance of the Labor, Socialist Left and Centre parties. Halvorsen distanced her party's policy from that of the government. (*Aftenposten* 6.1.06)

SPAIN

Proscribed organisations and bans

Spain questions terrorist lists, as repeated errors exposed

The case of Ahmad Mardini who has been listed as a terrorist by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has opened a debate in Spain about the nature of these lists. It has also drawn attention to the fact that the system of international terror lists is riddled with errors, with potentially devastating consequences for the individuals involved. In fact, sources close to the General Directorate of the Treasury have told *El País* that almost all of the bank accounts seized in Spain since September 11 2001, held by people on the international lists of terrorists drawn up by the UN and the EU, have been seized in error. And a source from the Spanish Federation of Savings Banks (CECA) stated that the fact that the lists are not accurate had led to many innocent people having their assets frozen.

The case of Ahmad Mardini

Ahmad Mardini, a Syrian-born naturalised Spaniard who has lived in Spain for thirty-six years and has three Spanish-born children, found that he was listed as a terrorist by the Federal Reserve Bank, the UN and the EU, when he tried to cash a money transfer sent from his brother via the Western Union to a post office in San Martin de la Vega, a town 22 kilometres from Madrid.

Mardini came to the authorities attention when he was wrongly arrested in November 2001 in a round-up of terror suspects. He was arrested, it seems, because five years earlier he had sold his shop in a Madrid neighbourhood to two former members of the Mujahideen who were convicted by Spain's High Court of giving financial support to jihadists. During his five-day detention, the authorities took his photo and taped him on video. Despite never being charged, these images of him appeared on several TV stations in relation to terrorism stories and, as a result, he lost his job as a deliveryman for Coca-Cola.

Lists inaccurate and prone to error

The Economy Ministry refused to give *El País* data about the mistakes made or the amounts seized, on the grounds of confidentiality, but data from other sources shows that the system of terrorist lists is riddled with errors. The total of €36,000 that has been frozen in Spain – corresponding to ninety-seven people, most of them Muslims – between 2001 and 2006 have had to be unfrozen, as the account-holders have nothing to do with fundamentalist terrorism. They were people with first names or surnames identical or similar to those stored in the computers of banks and financial operators.

According to sources close to the General Directorate of the Treasury, cited by *El País*, 'We have had to unfreeze the vast majority of the frozen accounts. Either they were similar names or cases of two people sharing the same name ... The lists are being fine-tuned and improved'. (*El País*, English language version 5.9.06)

SWEDEN

Proscribed organisations and bans

Hamas deputy granted visa

The Swedish government became the first EU country to receive a Hamas representative when it granted a visa to the Palestinian minister for refugees, the Hamas deputy Atef Udwan. It allowed him to travel across the Schengen borderless zone and attend meetings with German parliamentarians. A spokesperson for the Israeli government Gideon Meir told Swedish public TV that the granting of the visa was a 'big mistake' and criticised Sweden for granting it, despite the fact that Hamas was an EU-listed terrorist organisation. He also implied that more people in Sweden than in any other European country were hostile to Israel. (*EU Observer* 18.5.06)

Uzbek resident arrested in Stockholm on Interpol warrant

The wrongful detention in Sweden of an Uzbek dissident who has refugee status in Norway has raised fundamental questions about the EU's relationship with the government of Uzbekistan, says Human Rights Watch.

Mohammad Solih is chair of the Freedom party which is banned in Uzbekistan. As an independent candidate, he challenged president Karimov in the 1991 presidential elections, only to be detained and persecuted, forcing him to seek political asylum in Norway. Solih, on his way to London for meetings with government officials and civil society groups, was arrested at Stockholm's Arlanda airport on 16 May, on an Interpol warrant, based on an extradition request posted by the Uzbek government. He was released after being detained overnight, after the Norwegian government confirmed his asylum status. According to Human Rights Watch, 'The Swedish government owes Solih an apology and must ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent similar mistakes'. It is absurd that the Uzbek president who is responsible for countless human rights abuses could travel freely to Europe while Mohammad Solih remains subject to an Interpol warrant, concluded HRW. (Human Rights Watch, press release, 19.5.06)

Police and intelligence services

Public services oppose cooption into war on terror

Leaders of education unions have reacted strongly to a statement by Sweden's security police that it intends to employ informers in schools, social services and associations, in the fight against terrorism.

Klas Bergenstrand, head of Säpo, said in an interview with the newspaper *Sydsvenskan*, that more contacts were needed if Sweden were to learn from the British experience. Metta Fjellkner, chair of the National Union of Teachers, expressed scepticism about plans to get teachers or others in the public sector to act as informers. Eva-Lis Preisc, chair of the Swedish Teacher's Union said that 'Teachers have a big job, but it doesn't include being a police officer' while the director general of Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare, Kjell Asplund, was also critical. The Greens compared it to a 'witch hunt' and the Left Party accused Säpo of encouraging a crime. (*The Local* 24.1.06)

Refugee organisations critical

Börje Sjökvist, chair of the refugee organisation swera (svensk flyttinghjälp) said that Säpo's plans to look for Muslim extremists in schools, in the social services and within associations was an extreme proposal that resembled the actions of dictatorships as in the former Soviet Union and in Pinochet's Chile. Such a proposal could act as 'a case of agitation against an ethnic group', he said. (*UNHCR Baltic & Nordic Headlines* 31.1.06)

SWITZERLAND

Police and intelligence services

Intelligence services concerned over 'homegrown terrorism'

A Swiss Federal Police intelligence report released in May reversed a previous assessment that the terrorist threat posed to Switzerland was virtually non-existent and concluded that Switzerland had become a 'jihadi field of operation' with terrorist attacks an 'increasing possibility'. In June, a dozen immigrants with Swiss residence rights were arrested in connection with an alleged conspiracy to shoot down an Israeli airliner flying from Geneva to Tel Aviv. This case has caused alarm. Jacques Pitteloud, a former coordinator of the Swiss intelligence agencies who now heads the Center for International Security Policy said, 'We might be facing a new era in homegrown terrorism'. (*Washington Post* 21.7.06)

UK

Anti-terror laws

New anti-terror law passed

The new Terrorism Act 2006 introduced several new terrorist-related offences. It makes indirectly encouraging terrorism by the 'glorifying' of terrorism through speech or publication an offence and allows the state to ban non-violent organisations if they are deemed to 'glorify' terrorism. In addition, the period in which a person can be held in pre-charge detention has been extended from fourteen to twenty-eight days.

Anti-terror citizenship reforms included in immigration act

Civil rights organisations are concerned that the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act passed in March 2006 treats counter-terrorism as a matter of immigration and nationality control. Specific clauses bring more people within the scope of immigration control by removing their citizenship or right of abode in the UK or refusing to register them as British citizens.

Attack on citizenship rights

Clause 56 (Deprivation of Citizenship) amends the British Nationality Act 1981 to give the home secretary the power to deprive a person of British citizenship if 'satisfied that the deprivation is conducive to the public good' and establishes a list of unacceptable behaviour. The civil liberties organisation Liberty criticised the clauses for being poorly drafted leading to extremely broad administrative discretion and great scope for arbitrariness.

Other clauses allow the home secretary to remove the right to abode in Britain from a Commonwealth citizen if it would be 'conducive to the public good'. And reforms to the acquisition of nationality effectively end the concept of registration by entitlement as some

restricted categories of people are currently entitled to register as British. This legal entitlement is now subjected to a requirement that the home secretary be satisfied that a person with an entitlement to register is of 'good character'. The Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) has suggested that the test should not be applied to children under the age of eighteen. To refuse to register a child as British for something that they have done while a child is too harsh a penalty. Nicolas Blake QC pointed out that Section 58 enabled the home secretary to refuse to register a person aged ten or over as a citizen if not satisfied that he or she is of good character.

Impact on minorities

Liberty pointed to the disproportionate effect the provisions will have on minority ethnic and religious groups, as those with dual citizenship are people from ethnic or religious minorities. In fact, in future, a person's 'Britishness' has become a 'temporary state, removable at will be the Government, rather than a permanent part of a person's identity'. Nicholas Blake QC pointed out that the provisions to allow people who are British citizens by birth who hold dual nationality to be deprived of British nationality and deported will apply regardless of whether they have had any previous contact with the country of their dual nationality and without the need to have been charged with a criminal offence. In future, 'renouncing citizenship of the other country may be the only way for a person to ensure that his or her British citizenship is secure and continues to provide the protections that have long been a fundamental right'. (Liberty, press release, March 2006, *Times* 25.4.06)

Racial profiling

Passenger profiling considered following alleged airport terror threat

Following the arrest of twenty-four British citizens suspected of being part of a conspiracy to explode bombs on planes heading from Britain to the United States, reports suggest that the Department for Transport are in talks with the aviation authority to introduce a method of passenger profiling which could be used to single out Muslims for security checks. But Ali Dizaei, one of Britain's most senior Muslim police officers, speaking on BBC 2's 'Newsnight', said that the move would create a new offence of 'travelling whilst Asian'. Inayat Bunglawala, spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, said the procedure, which includes 'behavioural pattern recognition' would inevitably lead to discrimination. Muslims, who are not an ethnicity, already felt 'unfairly targeted' because of their appearance, and that some sort of profiling was already in effect.

Positive profiling not racial profiling

Home secretary John Reid said that in considering the use of advanced passenger data it was important to distinguish between 'positive profiling' and 'ethnic or racial profiling'. The Home Office has two pilot schemes running - project Iris and project Semaphore. The latter involves screening 10 million passengers a year on selected international routes. (*Guardian* 17.8.06)

Asian students removed from flight after passenger protests

Sohail Ashraf and Khurram Zeb, both 22, were removed from a Monarch Airlines flight from Malaga to Manchester, even though they had cleared all the security checks before boarding the passenger jet, because three families had refused to enter the plane unless they were removed. Sohail Ashraf and Khurram Zeb, both 22, are blaming the airline for the pilot's action, pointing out that the Spanish authorities had expressed their frustration at the young men's eviction from the flight. According to Ashraf, the airline had allowed the passengers to dictate what took place from the moment they boarded the plane. Passengers were staring at them, 'I felt angry at first. I knew they were staring at us, it was because we are Muslim.' When the young men began to converse in Urdu, passengers believed they were speaking in Arabic, and complaints were made. At this point, they were told that they must leave the plane, and be questioned by police. An armed Spanish guard was waiting for them, but they were soon released. (*Guardian* 24.8.06, *Independent* 21.8.06)

Another British Muslim removed from transatlantic flight

Amar Ashraf, a British Muslim airline pilot, has lodged a formal complaint with Continental Airlines and the US authorities, after being hauled off a transatlantic flight from Manchester to Newark, New Jersey by a stewardess, moments before take-off, and then questioned by armed police. Ashraf, who is an airline pilot in the US, says his removal was due to his having a 'Muslim-sounding name'. (*Independent* 22.8.06)

More aviation scares involving Muslims and travellers of Asian appearance

Several cases that occurred in August add weight to Chief Superintendent Ali Dizaei's claim that passenger profiling would create a new crime of 'flying while Asian'.

- Azar Iqbal, traveled to Atlanta with his family on Delta airlines, only to be separated from his wife and children, held for questioning by US immigration officials, and deported to the UK.
- A website used by commercial airline pilots has highlighted an incident where two British women on a flight from Spain to the UK complained about flying with a bearded Muslim, even though the man had been security checked twice. (*Independent* 22.8.06)

Proscribed organisations and bans

New organisations proscribed under Terrorism Act

A number of organisations have been proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2006 which allows for the proscription of extremist groups for 'glorifying' terrorism and extends proscription to 'aliases' of organisations already listed. UK-based organisations Al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect, said to be offshoots of Al-Muhajiron, have been banned for 'glorifying terrorism'. At the same time, a number of organisations have been defined as 'foreign terrorist organisations' and banned. Teyrebazen Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK, or the Kurdistan Liberation Hawks) and the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), based in western Pakistan have been proscribed. Kongra Gel Kurdistan

and Kadek have been banned on the grounds that they are 'alternative names for the PKK' (both have already been proscribed by the EU). (www.statewatch.org.terrorists/listedlatest.html)

Anti-terrorist operations

London: anti-terrorist raid leads to shooting and widespread criticism

In the early hours of the morning of 2 June 2006, armed police officers wearing chemical protective suits, conducted raids under the Terrorism Act 2000 on two houses in Forest Gate, east London, following 'specific intelligence' that, amongst other things, chemical devices were stored there. Two British Bangladeshi brothers, Muhammad Abdulkahar and Abul Koyair were arrested for alleged involvement in the 'commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism'. But by 10 June both brothers had been released without charge, as questions and anger about the nature of the raid and its consequences raged on.

Details of arrests

In the first 'anti-terror' shooting in the UK since police mistakenly shot Jean Charles de Menezes in July 2005, 23-year-old Muhammad Abdulkahar was shot in the shoulder at close range while coming down the stairs at one of the houses. Muhammad Abdulkahar alleged that he was kicked in the face after being shot and pleading that he couldn't breathe. He said he was told to 'shut the f*** up, stay there, stay there' before being dragged down the stairs by his foot, with his head banging on the stairs. He was then allegedly thrown on the pavement and put in a boiler suit, taken to hospital and then to the police station.

Complaints' Commission launches investigation

Assistant Commissioner Andy Haymen apologised for the 'hurt' caused to the brothers by the operation but said that the police had 'no option' but to intervene, while the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) launched an investigation into the shooting. It concluded that there was no 'evidence of intent or recklessness on the part of the firearms officer and that no offence was committed in the firing of the weapon'.

A separate IPPC inquiry was launched into allegations that the Dogha family from Gujerat who lived in the second raided house (but were not under suspicion), were assaulted. There was an eight-month-old baby present in the house when they were raided and one man claims he was struck on the head with a machine gun. The family's DNA and fingerprints were taken and they were not allowed to return to their home, which was sealed off.

Nature of police intelligence questioned

It has now emerged that the raid was carried out on the basis of information provided by a single source. This man, allegedly Mohammed Abu Bakr Mansha, a childhood friend of the brothers, had been jailed for a terror offence and had a below-average IQ. The Forest Gate brothers were alleged to have visited this man in prison.

But a police report stated that 'Operation Volga'

had been the result of information from a 'credible sensitive source' who had provided information in the past. A decision was taken to conduct the raid in the interests of 'public safety': 'Further delay was not believed to be acceptable given the threat to public safety and the fear that if the intelligence is correct there was no guarantee the device would remain at the location leading to a loss of control.' Metropolitan police commissioner Sir Ian Blair indicated that similar raids would be conducted in the future: 'There will be other raids but the lesson of Forest Gate is that we have to find new methods of engaging with the Muslim community in particular to reassure them of the necessity and appropriateness of police actions.' (*Guardian* 2, 9, 16, 19.6.06, *BBC News* 6, 10, 29.6, 10.7.06, *Blink* 14.6.06, *Independent* 19.6.06, *This Is Local London* 7.6.06)

Expulsion & Extradition

Appeals Commission rules that terror suspects can be deported to Algeria

In August, the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) dismissed the case of Y against his deportation to Algeria on national security grounds, stating that Y would not face a real risk of torture if he was returned to Algeria. The decision was seen as a victory for the government's decision to negotiate for agreements with countries such as Algeria that they would not torture returned suspect. But the ruling was immediately condemned by AI as an affront to justice and a green light to torture.

The case of Y

Y is a torture survivor with refugee status in the UK. His claims, that he has been tortured by the Algerian security services including being beaten daily for a period in 1994 with iron bars and rifle butts, particularly to the head, are substantiated by medical evidence.

In 2005, Y was acquitted, together with others, of all charges connected with a purported attempt to manufacture and use ricin. However, he was rearrested pending deportation on national security grounds. The Algerian authorities had sought his extradition, citing two convictions passed against him in his absence for organising an armed group prejudicial to the state. SIAC says that despite his acquittal in the ricin plot they had serious grounds for believing he was part of a conspiracy. It cites the fact that he worked in the bookshop of the Finsbury Park mosque and that it was 'inconceivable that those who ran the mosque, notably Abu Hamza, would have tolerated someone in a position of long-term employment in the bookshop who was not sympathetic to their views'.

Criticism of SIAC

AI condemned the SIAC proceedings as 'profoundly unfair. Not only was Y denied due process, but the case against him rested on secret intelligence that was withheld from Y, his lawyers of choice and the public'. The SIAC verdict was also condemned by three of the jurors at Y's original criminal trial who issued a statement saying that they were shocked 'that despite his

acquittal at the criminal trial, the exact same evidence was being used again to "justify his deportation"'. The jurors told AI that as 'three ordinary members of the public we have had our eyes opened to such an unfair and unjust sequence of events orchestrated by the authorities that we feel compelled to speak out. This is contrary to anything we thought could be possible in a democratic, free society.'

In response, Lord Carlile, the independent watchdog on the anti-terror laws, accused AI of being 'thoroughly naïve'. He stated that an acquittal in a criminal trial did not mean it was in the national interest for that person to remain in Britain.

Basis of deportation to Algeria questioned

The UK government has not been able to reach a Memorandum of Understanding with Algeria re torture suspects, as the Algerians are reluctant to formally admit that torture had been practised in the past. The only assurance the UK government had, came in December 2005, and is contained in an unpublished exchange of letters between prime ministers.

Blair, anticipating legal disapproval for this measure, had stated that he was prepared to change the law if judges put legal obstacles in the way of such deportations. SIAC said that the changing political situation in Algeria and the high-profile nature of the case meant it was inconceivable that assurances given to Blair would prove unreliable or in bad faith. Justice Ouseley, speaking for SIAC, added that 'The level of allegations of torture has declined significantly and the situation in the country had stabilised'. Home Secretary John Reid welcomed the decision, adding that the Algerian Charter on Peace and National Reconciliation, and a recent amnesty meant that a death sentence and two life sentences passed on Y for terrorist activity would be extinguished on his return.

Gareth Peirce, solicitor for Y, said that she was profoundly disturbed by SIAC's ruling. 'A year ago Tony Blair said the rules of the game had changed and they would deport refugees to countries that they knew used torture, but they would not do it unless we have a memorandum of understanding and an independent monitoring group. Now, one year later, there is no memorandum of understanding and no monitoring group in place. The government are saying they are not necessary and today the court has endorsed that.' (*Guardian* 25.8.06)

Memoranda of Understanding with Jordan, Lebanon, Libya

The government has agreed Memoranda of Understanding with Jordan, Lebanon and Libya, whereby terror suspects can be returned to these countries even though they are known to use torture. The UK government is negotiating a similar agreement with Algeria. The Medical Foundation, which has helped eighty Libyan victims of torture in the past twenty years, views with deep suspicion the Libyan government's assurance that Islamists deported from Britain will not be tortured. (AI, press release 21.11.05)

British Muslim to be extradited to US

In November 2005, the then home secretary Charles Clarke gave the green light for the extradition of Babar

Ahmad, a 32-year-old computer expert from south London, wanted in the US where he faces charges of supporting terrorism, conspiring to kill Americans and money laundering. His extradition comes under controversial measures established in January 2004, designed to speed up the extradition of suspected terrorists and does not require the US to present evidence of the case against a suspect.

The case of Babar Ahmad

Babar Ahmad was initially arrested, and released without charge after seven days, under anti-terror laws in December 2003. After the dawn raid leading to the arrest, police were accused of punching the suspect on numerous occasions, grabbing his genitals and handcuffing his wife. He said they then 'put me in the prostrate position we adopt when we pray' before 'laughing and asking, "Where is your God now?". One officer was alleged to have said to him: 'You will remember this day for the rest of your life you fucking bastard.' A doctor's examination revealed injuries to his face, scalp, neck, chest, back, upper arm, elbow, forearm, abdomen, thigh and feet, and tests found blood in his urine.

Following a complaint by Ahmad, an officer was investigated but it was concluded that there was 'no case to answer'.

In August 2004, following the US extradition request, Babar Ahmad was arrested again, accused of running US-based websites (namely azzam.com) between 1998 and 2003 to recruit fighters for jihad in Afghanistan and Chechnya. Furthermore, he was accused of trying to set up a terrorist training camp in Arizona, holding classified US navy documents and maintaining e-mail contact with a Chechen rebel leader. US Attorney Kevin O'Connor is reported to have said: 'If you're supporting the Taleban and the Taleban is killing American soldiers, we're alleging you're conspiring to kill American citizens abroad.'

In May 2005, Bow Street Magistrates' Court ruled that he could be extradited, but this needed final approval from the Home Secretary. In November 2005, the then Home Secretary Charles Clarke gave the green light to extradite Babar Ahmad to face terrorism charges in the USA, where his lawyers fear he would be at risk of the death penalty. He and his family announced they would make an appeal against the decision in the High Court and would also appeal against the US court's decision to demand an extradition. After High Court appeal hearings in July, Babar Ahmad was still awaiting a decision in the Autumn of 2006. (*BBC News* 13.4.05, 16.11.05, *Guardian* 13.12.03, 24.1.04, 16.11.05)

Turkey extradition request leads to refugee's arrest

A 28-year-old Turkish refugee Onder Dolutas was arrested on 30 January 2006, following a request from the Turkish authorities for his extradition. The arrest does not relate to any activity in the UK, but is based on charges brought against him in Turkey that he denies and which formed the basis of his refugee status in the UK – which he achieved in January 2003. (*Indymedia* 3.3.06)

Torture

Pakistan may have tortured key suspect in airline terror plot

Reports suggest that Pakistan was the main source of intelligence that led to the arrest in Britain of twenty-four people accused of being part of a conspiracy to explode bombs on planes heading from Britain to the United States. But there are increasing concerns that that 'intelligence' may have been obtained in ways unacceptable in the UK. Rashid Rauf, a British citizen arrested in Pakistan is said to have been a key player in the attacks and a prime source of information. Reports in Pakistani papers suggest that he had 'broken' under interrogation and Asma Jehangir, of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan is in no doubt about the meaning of broken. 'I don't deduce, I know torture', she said.

On 16 August, foreign ministry spokeswoman, Tasneem Alam revealed that Rauf was still being interrogated and had not been given access to a lawyer or to British consular officials. He was being held in a safe house used for interrogation, rather than in a jail or police station. Under Pakistani law, he could be held for one month without charge. (*Guardian* 15, 16.8.05)

Shoot to kill

No police charged in Jean Charles de Menezes case

On 17 July 2006, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced that no individual officers would face charges over the shooting dead of Jean Charles de Menezes. Instead, the CPS is to prosecute the Metropolitan Police under health and safety laws for 'failing to provide for the health, safety and welfare' of Jean Charles de Menezes. But even this is on doubt. On 4 August, the Metropolitan Police Authority asked the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, to stop the health and safety act prosecution from taking place. (*Guardian* 28.7.06, 5.8.06).

The case of Jean Charles de Menezes

Jean Charles de Menezes, a 27-year-old Brazilian electrician, was shot seven times in the head at Stockwell underground station, south London, on the assumption he was a terrorist, on 22 July 2005. Ever since then, the police's account of events has been exposed as riddled with inconsistencies and the actions of the Metropolitan Police Commission, Sir Ian Blair, have also come under intense scrutiny. Commissioner Blair, it seems, attempted to deny the Independent Police Complaints Commission access to the scene of the shooting, arguing that anti-terrorist operations were a greater priority at the time. After the shooting, Sir Ian Blair said the shooting was 'directly linked' to anti-terror operations and that Jean Charles de Menezes 'was challenged and refused to obey police instructions', facts later exposed as erroneous. (*Guardian* 1.10.05, *BBC News* 3.8.06)

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