Introduction

Islamophobia, as a constructed term and a field of academic research, is undergoing a positive transformation and growth with all types of publications focusing on the subject. For the term’s circulation, a basic google search of Islamophobia garners millions of entries covering an expanding spectrum of topics and research areas, not all positive or constructive, which is to be expected and only affirms the expanding nature of the field. Moreover, the term, which for a while existed on the margins in alternative publications, often passed over or explained using different words, is central to media coverage of Muslims, is included in policy circles discussions, and is a mainstream concept. On the academic front and, more precisely, over the past three to five years, the number of scholars, academic institutions, and research centers that have embraced the term and organized panels, conferences, and courses is expanding daily. Islamophobia studies expansion, inside and outside of academia, has translated into a steady flow of cutting-edge books, published articles, specialized reports, and diverse data from all the corners of the globe. Also, every significant professional academic association has included papers, panels, and special round table discussions on Islamophobia, which illustrates this transformation and the adoption of the term and all the entanglements associated with it.

On March 2, 2021, the International Islamophobia Studies Research Association (IISRA) became a reality. The *Islamophobia Studies Journal* and *Re-Orient Journal* will serve as the intellectual hub for scholars’ contributions to the newly emerging field. IISRA’s specific purpose is to support the dissemination of academic research and publicly engaged scholarship on Islamophobia through academic fora that will facilitate the transnational, multidirectional flow of knowledge across academia, policy and government, media, and global civil society. By engaging in knowledge mobilization activities such as networking, disseminating, exchanging, and supporting research-based knowledge, the organization will provide the hub for academic leadership in the field of Islamophobia Studies.

The association’s founding and development cements the Islamophobia studies field and provides a professional umbrella for an expanding number of scholars and graduate students. In the years ahead, the journal’s content will be more formally connected and aligned to an annual academic conference, and the articles will primarily emerge from this.

This current volume focuses on the rising tide of Islamophobia in Asia, a continent registering the most horrific examples of Islamophobia with already documentable cases of genocide. Examples of Islamophobia include the Chinese government’s confinement of upward of 2 million Uyghur Muslims in concentration camps in the Xinjiang province, which is a wholesale attempt at erasing Islam from the region. India’s BJP ruling party and the Hindutva ideology are attempting to demographically re-engineer the country and are doing so by stoking Islamophobia and directing violence against Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Christian minorities. Furthermore, India’s assault and revoking of the autonomous status of Kashmir has led to further militarization of the region, cutting it off from the outside world, and sanctioning indiscriminate violence and mayhem—warranting a genocide alert. The Muslim population in Myanmar, the Rohingya, experienced genocide with the destruction of their villages and towns, and were therefore driven out into neighboring countries.
We have to admit that academic research and publication is heavily skewed toward covering Islamophobia in the Global North, which is defensible on one level but increasingly the Global South is home to extreme religious and ethnic nationalism and a nativism that targets Muslims. This volume is not a complete treatment of every country in Asia or the rising tide of Islamophobia; instead, it points to the crisis at hand, and invites scholars and researchers to undertake more studies and policymakers to take a closer interest in these developments.

The articles in this volume provide recent research in Europe and North America with a focus on bringing new academic work into the conversation. Indeed, the collection of articles provide a vital contribution to the field, and we hope this will be useful for the upcoming academic year. Lastly, this volume will be part of the Open Access transition at Pluto Journals, which gives the ISJ and others access to the broadest possible audience at no cost. Our collective hope is that Pluto Journals will have a scholarly impact on the one hand and serve as useful intellectual tools for social justice and transformative change, on the other. The Islamophobia Studies Journal is first and foremost a modest attempt at countering, resisting, and in due course defeating the purveyors of bigotry, racism, and violence in the world. The written word is an instrument of liberation that outlasts and illuminates the dark corners of the world!