

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

**Label:** SGAB-57014

**Date introduced:** November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Author:** Maryam Alghafir

**Sponsor(s):** Muslim Student Association (MSA), Muslim Legal Society (MLS), Refugee Advancement through Humanitarian Aid (RAHA), Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)

**Draft:** Final

**Bill Against Anti-Muslim Sentiment and Islamophobia**

**Whereas,** France's President, Emmanuel Macron, has intensified Anti-Muslim Sentiment globally through the act of displaying Charli Hebdo's caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ on government buildings, an act deemed disrespectful and discriminatory against Muslims worldwide by further institutionalizing xenophobia and Islamophobia<sup>1</sup>;

**Whereas,** President Macron has restricted funds that Muslim communities receive from abroad<sup>2</sup>;

**Whereas,** President Macron has imposed a certificate program for French-trained imams<sup>2</sup>;

**Whereas,** President Macron has dissolved more than fifty French Muslim associations (including a mainstream group devoted to combating Islamophobia) and closed more than seventy-three mosques<sup>2</sup>;

**Whereas,** President Macron has engaged in hate speech that demonizes the entire religion of Islam<sup>2</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cair.com/press\\_releases/cair-warns-american-muslims-against-travel-to-france-condemns-macrons-hypocritical-attempt-to-suppress-boycott-campaign/](https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-warns-american-muslims-against-travel-to-france-condemns-macrons-hypocritical-attempt-to-suppress-boycott-campaign/)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/macron-france-reform-islam-paty/2020/10/23/f1a0232c-148b-11eb-bc10-40b25382f1be\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/macron-france-reform-islam-paty/2020/10/23/f1a0232c-148b-11eb-bc10-40b25382f1be_story.html)



**Whereas,** France bans the hijab, an Islamic head covering, in schools and for public servants at their workplace, as well as continuously humiliates and discriminates against hijab wearing women<sup>3</sup>;

**Whereas,** France bans the niqab, an Islamic face covering, which is punishable with a fine and citizenship course, yet mandates masks in public, exposing the true prejudice and double standard of this ban<sup>4</sup>;

**Whereas,** France bans the burkini, Islamic swimwear, under the premise that they are freeing women from oppression, when in reality they are discriminating against women based on their religious practices and infringing on their rights as women to choose their attire<sup>5</sup>;

**Whereas,** Macron's campaign of Islamophobic bigotry mirrors numerous other Anti-Muslim government actions that have been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>6</sup>;

**Whereas,** Millions of Uighurs and Muslim minorities in China are being forced into concentration camps where they must renounce their religion and swear loyalty to Chinese President Xi Jinping in addition to being tortured, raped, brainwashed, and killed<sup>7</sup>;

**Whereas,** Millions of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are denied citizenship and now live in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh as they had to flee Myanmar in August 2017 to escape genocide. The remaining Rohingya's in Myanmar are subject to persecution and face institutionalized discrimination, including restrictions on movement, education, and health-care access, as well as waves of deadly violence<sup>8</sup>;

**Whereas,** Muslims in India are being denied citizenship based on religion and are at increased risk of violence under the hands of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders who have repeatedly made Hindu nationalist and Anti-Muslim remarks in their speeches and interviews as well as encouraged and even incited violent attacks by party supporters which has led to the death and injury of many Muslims<sup>9</sup>;

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50079997>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/28/847433454/from-niqab-to-n95>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/19/world/europe/frances-burkini-bans-are-about-more-than-religion-or-clothing.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://thegeopolitics.com/growing-islamophobia-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/04/09/shoot-traitors/discrimination-against-muslims-under-indias-new-citizenship-policy#>



**Whereas,** Israel continues to occupy Palestinian land by expanding illegal settlements into the occupied West Bank and enforcing illegal air, land, and sea blockades of the Gaza Strip, restricting the movement of people and goods (including medical supplies) into the area as well as Israel's continuous unlawful arrests, detentions, torture, and killing of Muslim Palestinians<sup>10</sup>;

**Whereas,** the United States has perpetrated Anti-Muslim rhetoric that has given rise to hate groups and incited violence against fellow Muslim brothers and sisters as well as resulted in unwarranted surveillance, unlawful profiling, and exclusionary immigration policies targeting people of Islamic faith in the name of terrorism reform<sup>11</sup>;

**Whereas,** the continuous persecution of Muslims around the world emphasizes the blatant disregard for human rights and the Anti-Muslim rhetoric that has pervaded<sup>12</sup>;

**Whereas,** we are in a period of continuous Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim rhetoric that continues to further the divide between Muslims youth and their communities, which leads to the alienation of Muslims<sup>13</sup>;

**Whereas,** the University of Houston embraces diversity and recognizes its responsibility to foster a welcoming environment for students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds<sup>14</sup>

**Whereas,** the A.D. Bruce Religion Center has educational programs and activities focusing on religious issues with an emphasis on interfaith dialogue<sup>15</sup>;

**Whereas,** a lack of knowledge and awareness combined with a lack of political action allow for the perpetuation of human rights violations;

**Whereas,** the 57<sup>th</sup> UH SGA is committed to understanding the needs of students and advocating for those who have been underrepresented and amplifying the voices of those who have been historically silenced<sup>16</sup>;

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/issues/national-security/discriminatory-profiling/anti-muslim-discrimination>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/19/704893569/coping-with-the-persistent-trauma-of-anti-muslim-rhetoric-and-violence>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/19/704893569/coping-with-the-persistent-trauma-of-anti-muslim-rhetoric-and-violence>

<sup>14</sup> <https://uh.edu/about/diversity-statement/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://uh.edu/adbruce/>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.uh.edu/sga/about\\_us/](https://www.uh.edu/sga/about_us/)



**Therefore, be it enacted the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:**

Condemns the actions of President Macron, other acts of systemic discrimination against members of the Islamic faith and remains in complete solidarity with the Muslim community.

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA calls on all University of Houston students, faculty, Staff, and administration to be found in solidarity with the Muslim community and practice the following forms of direct political action:

- 1) Condemn Anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiments in one's communities;
- 2) Educate one's self on the basic tenants of Islam, the injustices committed against Muslims around the world, and clearly differentiate between terrorism and Islam;
- 3) Exercise one's U.S. and Texas constitutional right to boycott and protest<sup>17</sup>;
- 4) Sign Petitions<sup>18</sup>;
- 5) Hold elected officials accountable; and
- 6) Donate<sup>19</sup>

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will hold open and transparent communication with Muslim organizations and activist organizations at the University of Houston;

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will monitor religious equity and sentiments through the release of student surveys;

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/26/europe/france-boycott-muslim-countries-macron-intl/index.html>

<https://www.aclutx.org/en/know-your-rights/freedom-of-speech-right-to-protest>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.change.org/p/boycott-french-products-place-a-ban-on-islamophobia-and-hate-against-islam/sign?original\\_footer\\_petition\\_id=22170137&algorithm=promoted&source\\_location=petition\\_footer&grid\\_position=2&pt=AVBldGI0aW9uAMf8hAEAAAAAX5lsTBCPOXkxYmUyZTk5Mw%3D%3D](https://www.change.org/p/boycott-french-products-place-a-ban-on-islamophobia-and-hate-against-islam/sign?original_footer_petition_id=22170137&algorithm=promoted&source_location=petition_footer&grid_position=2&pt=AVBldGI0aW9uAMf8hAEAAAAAX5lsTBCPOXkxYmUyZTk5Mw%3D%3D)  
[https://www.change.org/p/the-congress-of-the-french-parliament-muslim-women-in-france-can-t-wear-niqab-in-public-give-them-the-freedom-they-deserve?source\\_location=topic\\_page](https://www.change.org/p/the-congress-of-the-french-parliament-muslim-women-in-france-can-t-wear-niqab-in-public-give-them-the-freedom-they-deserve?source_location=topic_page)  
<https://www.change.org/p/government-of-belgium-approve-muslim-women-to-have-the-right-to-wear-a-hijab-in-universities-belgium>

<https://www.change.org/p/stand-up-for-the-uyghur-muslims-in-china-antonioguterres-amnesty-un>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/help-stop-the-violence-in-myanmar/>

<https://www.change.org/p/u-s-senate-oppose-annexation-of-palestinian-land>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cair.com/donate/>

<https://irusa.org/middle-east/palestine/>

<https://donate.unhcr.org/int/rohingya/>



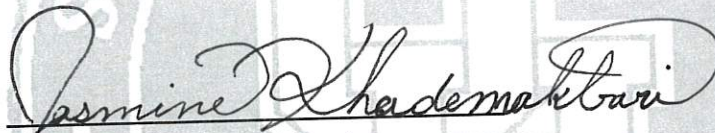
**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will work in partnership with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, UH administration, and student organizations towards expanding awareness and education of issue areas of advocacy plaguing the Muslim community on campus;

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will work in partnership with the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) to host sessions that increase Muslim-American youth knowledge about their constitutional rights;

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will advocate against and support efforts against Anti-Muslim policies at the local, state, and national level;

**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA supports the A.D. Bruce Religion Center in its efforts to facilitate interfaith dialogue;

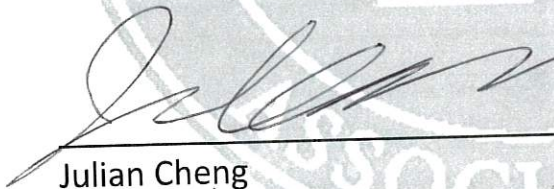
**Be it further enacted,** the UH SGA will continue to advocate for social justice and equity on and off campus.



Jasmine Khademakbari

Student Government President

Date of President's Approval: 12/25/20



Julian Cheng

Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 12/25/20

**APPROVED**