

REPORT:

# ISLAMOPHOBIA

IN SLOVAKIA

2025

by THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION IN SLOVAKIA



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## About the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia

The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia (INS) is one of the key organizations representing the interests and needs of the Muslim community in Slovakia. Its work combines religious, community, educational and public-interest activities. The Foundation provides support to Muslims living in Slovakia, offers information to Muslim visitors, and helps create a space in which the community can preserve its religious and cultural identity while participating in Slovak society.

A central part of INS's mission is building understanding between Muslims and the wider non-Muslim public. The Foundation does this through educational activities, public communication, school and university presentations, interfaith dialogue, and the operation of the Córdoba cultural centre in Bratislava. Its public communication is also carried out through IslamOnline.sk, which serves as an information platform about Islam, Muslims in Slovakia, and issues affecting Muslim communities. The Foundation describes its long-term public mission as building bridges of understanding, connecting people, educating and bringing communities closer together.

The Islamic Foundation also plays a specific role in documenting and challenging anti-Muslim prejudice. It monitors media, political communication and social networks in order to record hate speech, discriminatory narratives and incidents directed against Muslims, migrants and refugees. INS is the only organization in Slovakia focused exclusively on combating anti-Muslim prejudice and notes that its position within the Muslim community allows it to collect testimonies that affected individuals may be reluctant to report to state authorities or the media.

Since 2013, INS has published annual reports on Islamophobia in Slovakia. These reports document key developments, public incidents, political rhetoric, legal barriers and civil society responses related to anti-Muslim prejudice. The Foundation's reports are also used as a data source for the OSCE/ODIHR annual reporting on hate crimes in Europe, making them an important contribution to international monitoring of intolerance and discrimination.

In 2025, the Foundation continued to combine community support with public advocacy. Its website and social media documented religious life, public statements, reactions to Islamophobic discourse, and community events, including information for Slovak pilgrims travelling to Mecca and public responses to anti-Muslim narratives in Slovak public debate.

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## Foreword

The year 2025 demonstrated that Islamophobia remains a persistent and evolving challenge within Slovak society. Anti-Muslim rhetoric continued to appear across political discourse, social networks and public debate, often linked to broader discussions about migration, security, European identity and cultural change. While Slovakia remains one of the European Union countries with the smallest Muslim populations, public discussions about Muslims and Islam continued to occupy disproportionate space in political communication and online mobilization.

A particularly visible trend during 2025 was the continued instrumentalization of anti-Muslim narratives by politicians and public figures. Several political actors used language portraying Muslims, migrants or Islam as a civilizational, demographic or security threat. This rhetoric intensified especially in online videos, Facebook posts and short-form social media content designed to generate emotional reactions and political mobilization.

Throughout the year, multiple public incidents contributed to the normalization of anti-Muslim prejudice. These included inflammatory videos by far-right politicians, online campaigns spreading fear about migration and Muslims, proposals advocating restrictions on Islamic religious clothing, and public statements connecting migrants and Muslims with violence, terrorism or societal collapse. Some of these narratives were amplified by politicians associated with nationalist and far-right movements, while others appeared in mainstream political or media environments.

The legal and structural position of Muslims in Slovakia remained unresolved in 2025. Slovakia continued to maintain one of the most restrictive systems of religious registration in Europe, effectively preventing Islam from obtaining official state recognition. As in previous years, Muslims in Slovakia remained without a state-recognized mosque, official Islamic cemetery, or equal institutional status compared to registered religious communities. The absence of meaningful political will to address these inequalities reinforced the long-term structural marginalization of the Muslim community.

Civil society organizations, human rights institutions and members of the Muslim community continued efforts aimed at dialogue, education and public engagement. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia maintained its role as the principal organization documenting anti-Muslim incidents, responding to hate speech and providing educational activities for schools, media and the wider public.

This report summarizes developments related to Islamophobia in Slovakia during 2025. It documents public incidents, political discourse, structural challenges and societal trends affecting Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. The report also highlights initiatives promoting tolerance, dialogue and equal rights, while providing recommendations aimed at strengthening religious freedom, combating discrimination and supporting a more inclusive democratic society.

## Muslims in Slovakia

The Muslim community in Slovakia remains relatively small in comparison with many Western European countries, yet it has undergone visible demographic changes in recent years. According to the latest available official census data from 2021, 3,862 people identified Islam as their religion. However, representatives of the Muslim community and independent observers generally consider this figure to be significantly underestimated, as some Muslims remain reluctant to publicly declare their faith due to fears of discrimination, social stigma or anti-Muslim hostility.

The most significant development affecting the Muslim population in Slovakia in recent years has been the rapid increase in labour migration. Since approximately 2022, Slovakia has experienced a growing shortage of low-cost labour, particularly in industry, logistics, construction, manufacturing and services. As a result, employers and recruitment agencies increasingly began bringing workers from predominantly Muslim countries and regions, especially Central Asia. Thousands of workers from countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have arrived in Slovakia to fill labour shortages in factories, warehouses and industrial production. Additional migration has also involved workers from India, Bangladesh and other Asian countries.

This represents an important shift in the Slovak context. For many years, large-scale labour migration from Muslim-majority countries was perceived primarily as a phenomenon associated with Western European states such as Germany, France or the United Kingdom. Slovakia was often politically portrayed as a country largely untouched by such demographic developments. However, economic realities and labour market pressures have increasingly connected Slovakia to the same migration dynamics visible elsewhere in Europe. Although the Muslim population remains relatively small overall, the visible presence of Muslim migrant workers has grown considerably compared to previous decades.

Based on community estimates and observations by the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia, the number of Muslims living in Slovakia during 2025 likely ranged between approximately 6,000 and 8,000 individuals, with labour migration being the primary factor behind this increase. Unlike the political narratives frequently promoted in public debate, this demographic growth has not been driven mainly by refugee resettlement or asylum migration, but rather by targeted economic migration responding to labour shortages within the Slovak economy.

The Muslim community in Slovakia remains ethnically diverse. In addition to long-established Arab, Albanian, Bosnian and Turkish communities, recent years have brought a larger presence of Central Asian workers and smaller groups from South Asia. The community also includes Slovak converts to Islam and Muslims who have lived in Slovakia for several decades, including doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, students and families integrated into Slovak society.

Bratislava continues to host the country's largest Muslim community and remains the main centre of religious and community life. Smaller but steadily growing communities also exist in Košice, Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Martin, Levice and other industrial regions where foreign labour migration has increased. Despite these demographic developments, Islam still lacks official state

recognition in Slovakia, leaving the Muslim community without the institutional status granted to officially registered religions.

The growing visibility of Muslim workers and migrants has increasingly influenced political and social discourse in Slovakia during 2025. Public debates concerning migration, labour shortages, demographic change and European identity often included anti-Muslim rhetoric and alarmist narratives about the supposed “Islamization” of Slovakia. In many cases, however, these narratives reflected broader political mobilization strategies rather than the everyday reality of the Muslim community itself.

## Islamophobic Incidents, Events and Discourse

Islamophobia remained a visible component of public discourse in Slovakia throughout 2025, particularly within political communication and online environments. Anti-Muslim rhetoric continued to be closely intertwined with discussions about migration, national identity, security and demographic change. Although the Muslim population in Slovakia remains relatively small, Muslims and migrants from Muslim-majority countries were repeatedly portrayed in public debate as a symbolic threat to Slovak society and European civilization.

One of the most significant trends during 2025 was the normalization of anti-Muslim narratives across social media platforms. Politicians, influencers and public figures frequently published videos and posts depicting Muslims as incompatible with European values, associating Islam with extremism, violence or cultural decline. These narratives were especially common within nationalist and far-right political circles, but similar themes also appeared in broader political and media discourse. Social networks such as Facebook and Instagram continued to function as primary channels for spreading emotionally charged anti-Muslim content designed to provoke fear and political mobilization.

Several public incidents during the year illustrated this trend. In February 2025, criticism emerged over online content connected to the retail chain Kaufland, which was accused by Muslim community representatives and anti-racism activists of using stereotypical portrayals of Arabs in marketing communication. The controversy triggered public discussion regarding the normalization of ethnic and cultural stereotypes targeting Arabs and Muslims in Slovak public space.

During spring and summer 2025, anti-Muslim rhetoric became increasingly visible within political discourse surrounding migration and labour policy. Multiple politicians and public figures reacted to discussions about the arrival of foreign workers to Slovakia by portraying Muslims and migrants as a demographic or cultural threat. Statements and videos published by figures associated with nationalist and far-right movements repeatedly framed Muslim migration as part of an alleged “Islamization” of Slovakia and Europe. In several cases, politicians explicitly warned against the arrival of Muslims in Slovakia, despite the fact that labour migration was largely driven by economic demand from Slovak employers facing labour shortages.

Particularly visible were online videos and statements by politicians connected to Republika and other nationalist actors. Public communication by far-right politicians Milan Mazurek and Milan Uhrík continued to present Muslims and migrants through security-oriented and dehumanizing narratives. In June 2025, political reactions to statements by Prime Minister Robert Fico regarding foreign workers and migration generated a wave of anti-Muslim commentary online. Videos published during this period framed Muslim workers as a civilizational danger and used emotionally charged rhetoric about the future ethnic and religious composition of Slovakia.

Islamophobic discourse also appeared outside strictly political contexts. In May 2025, criticism emerged regarding a publication associated with the organization IPčko in which the Muslim headscarf was reportedly discussed in connection with radicalization. Muslim community

representatives and anti-discrimination activists argued that such framing contributed to harmful stereotypes portraying visible Islamic identity as inherently suspicious or extremist.

Throughout the second half of 2025, anti-Muslim narratives increasingly focused on themes of “Islamization”, public religious visibility and migration-related fear. Politicians and public commentators published posts warning against migrants, demanding restrictions on Islamic clothing such as burqas or niqabs, or linking Muslims to violence and insecurity in Europe. Several viral social media posts spread unverified or false claims connecting migrants or Muslims to incidents abroad, often using these stories to reinforce broader anti-Muslim narratives targeting domestic audiences.

Online hate speech remained one of the most significant dimensions of Islamophobia during 2025. Comment sections on social media frequently contained dehumanizing language, calls for exclusion, anti-Arab insults and generalized hostility toward Muslims. The spread of short-form video content further intensified the emotional and polarizing nature of public debate. Muslims, migrants and people perceived to be Muslim were repeatedly discussed not as individuals, but as symbols of broader fears connected to globalization, migration and cultural change.

At the same time, public reactions against Islamophobia continued to emerge from civil society organizations, human rights advocates and parts of the media. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia regularly responded to public incidents, condemned inflammatory rhetoric and highlighted the negative consequences of anti-Muslim prejudice for social cohesion and democratic discourse. Nevertheless, the persistence and normalization of anti-Muslim narratives throughout 2025 demonstrated that Islamophobia remains deeply embedded within segments of Slovak political and online culture.

## Legal System

The legal status of Islam in Slovakia remained unchanged throughout 2025, and the Muslim community continued to face significant structural barriers resulting from the country’s restrictive system of religious registration. Slovakia remains one of the few European Union member states where Islam has no official state recognition despite the long-term existence of an organized Muslim community in the country.

The primary obstacle continues to be Act No. 308/1991 Coll. on the Freedom of Religious Faith and the Status of Churches and Religious Societies, particularly following amendments adopted in previous years that significantly tightened the registration requirements for religious communities. Under the current legislation, a religious community must submit signatures from at least 50,000 adult citizens with permanent residence in Slovakia in order to obtain official registration. This threshold effectively excludes Islam and several other minority religious communities from obtaining legal recognition.

The current system has repeatedly been criticized by human rights experts, religious freedom advocates and international observers as discriminatory and disproportionate. The

threshold itself exceeds the membership size of several already registered churches and creates a structural inequality between historically dominant religious institutions and smaller minority faiths. In practice, the law creates a situation in which Muslims are able to practice their religion privately, but remain excluded from many rights and institutional mechanisms available to officially recognized churches.

The absence of official registration continues to have practical consequences for the Muslim community in Slovakia. Islamic religious organizations are unable to function as officially recognized religious entities and must instead operate through civic associations or foundations. This creates long-term legal and administrative uncertainty and limits the institutional development of the community. Muslims in Slovakia remain unable to establish officially recognized mosques under the same framework available to registered churches, cannot provide state-accredited Islamic religious education in public schools, and face limitations regarding formal religious services in prisons, hospitals, social care institutions and the armed forces.

The lack of official recognition also contributes to the continued absence of an official mosque and Islamic cemetery in Slovakia. Despite the presence of Muslims in the country for decades, Slovakia remains the only European Union member state without a purpose-built state-recognized mosque. Religious activities therefore continue to take place primarily in cultural centres, rented spaces and community facilities operating under alternative legal forms.

No significant legislative reform concerning religious registration was adopted during 2025. Although criticism of the restrictive system continued among civil society organizations, academics and minority religious groups, there was no visible political consensus supporting meaningful reform. Public debate surrounding Islam and religious minorities remained heavily influenced by migration politics, identity-based rhetoric and fears connected to demographic change, making legislative progress politically difficult.

At the same time, public discussions concerning migration and the growing number of foreign workers in Slovakia indirectly intensified debates surrounding Islam and religious pluralism. The increasing presence of Muslim workers from Central Asia, South Asia and other regions contributed to renewed public attention toward the legal and social status of Islam in Slovakia. However, political discourse during 2025 often framed these developments primarily through the lens of security, cultural anxiety and anti-migration rhetoric rather than religious freedom and equal rights.

The continuation of this restrictive legal framework reinforced the broader climate of marginalization affecting Muslims in Slovakia. While the Muslim community remained active in religious, cultural and civic life, the absence of equal legal recognition continued to symbolize the unequal institutional position of Islam within the Slovak state.

## **Developments in 2025**

During 2025, public discussions concerning migration and foreign labour increasingly intersected with debates about Islam and religious minorities in Slovakia. The growing arrival of

workers from Central Asia, India and Bangladesh contributed to greater public visibility of Muslims in everyday Slovak society, particularly in industrial regions and larger cities. Despite these demographic changes, no substantial political initiative aimed at improving the legal status of Islam or reforming the restrictive religious registration system emerged during the year.

At the same time, anti-migration rhetoric used by several political actors indirectly reinforced negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam. Public discussions about labour migration frequently included warnings about cultural change, demographic transformation and the alleged “Islamization” of Europe, even though the actual Muslim population in Slovakia remained comparatively small. As a result, the legal marginalization of Islam continued to exist alongside a broader political climate in which Muslim visibility increasingly became a subject of polarized public debate.

## Physical and Verbal attacks

Documenting physical and verbal attacks against Muslims remains one of the more difficult aspects of monitoring Islamophobia in Slovakia. As in previous years, many incidents likely remain unreported due to fear of further hostility, lack of trust in authorities, normalization of discriminatory behaviour, or uncertainty regarding available reporting mechanisms. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia continues encouraging members of the Muslim community and the wider public to report incidents of anti-Muslim discrimination, hate speech and harassment.

Throughout 2025, no major publicly documented physical attack targeting Muslims received nationwide media attention. However, the absence of widely reported violent incidents should not be interpreted as an absence of hostility toward Muslims in everyday life. Reports gathered informally within the community continued to indicate experiences involving verbal harassment, discriminatory treatment and hostile reactions connected to visible Muslim identity, ethnicity or foreign origin.

The increasing arrival of foreign workers from Muslim-majority countries also contributed to new forms of vulnerability. Muslim workers employed in industrial production, logistics and construction often faced social isolation and language barriers. Public discourse portraying migrants and Muslims as cultural or security threats created an environment in which discriminatory behaviour could become normalized, particularly online and in public discussions surrounding migration.

Women wearing visible religious clothing such as the hijab continued to remain among the most visibly exposed members of the Muslim community. As in previous years, Muslim women reported experiences involving staring, verbal insults, online harassment or discriminatory comments in public spaces and on social media. In many cases, however, victims chose not to formally report these incidents.

Online hate speech remained a significant component of anti-Muslim hostility during 2025. Social media comment sections under political posts, migration-related news and viral videos

frequently contained anti-Arab insults, generalized hostility toward Muslims and dehumanizing rhetoric. Several public incidents documented during the year generated large volumes of hostile online reactions targeting Muslims collectively rather than addressing specific political issues. The spread of emotionally charged anti-migration content by politicians and influencers further intensified this atmosphere.

The persistence of inflammatory rhetoric in public discourse contributed to an environment in which anti-Muslim prejudice remained socially visible and, in some spaces, normalized. Although direct physical violence against Muslims appears to remain relatively rare in Slovakia compared to some Western European countries, the broader climate of hostility, suspicion and verbal aggression continued to affect the sense of safety and belonging among many Muslims living in the country.

For these reasons, continued monitoring, accessible reporting mechanisms and stronger public condemnation of hate speech remain essential for improving the understanding of anti-Muslim discrimination in Slovakia and ensuring better protection for affected individuals and communities.

## Politicians

Political discourse continued to play a major role in shaping public attitudes toward Muslims and migration in Slovakia throughout 2025. Anti-Muslim rhetoric remained especially visible among nationalist and far-right political actors, although themes related to migration, demographic change and Islam increasingly appeared across broader political discussions as well. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, continued to serve as the primary channels through which politicians communicated emotionally charged anti-migration and anti-Muslim narratives to the public.

Political discussions concerning migration intensified significantly during the first half of 2025 due to the growing number of foreign workers arriving in Slovakia from Central Asia, South Asia and other regions. Several politicians increasingly framed migration from Muslim-majority countries as a threat to Slovak society, European identity and public security. Discussions about labour shortages and economic migration therefore became closely intertwined with anti-Muslim rhetoric and narratives warning about the alleged “Islamization” of Slovakia.

In June 2025, Jana Bittó Cigániková, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, [published](#) a Facebook post criticizing a legislative proposal concerning access of religious representatives to hospitalized patients. In the post, Cigániková warned that the law could allegedly allow “a Muslim imam” to enter hospital wards without patient consent and gain access to personal and medical information. The post visually placed “Muslim imam” alongside mocking depictions of other religious groups and portrayed the presence of Muslim religious representatives in hospitals as a source of concern and fear.



Public debate intensified further following statements by Robert Fico, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, regarding migration and foreign labour policy. Jaroslav Nad', former Minister of Defence and chairman of the Democrats party, subsequently [published](#) a post criticizing possible geopolitical cooperation with Uzbekistan. The post framed Uzbekistan as a possible “gateway to Afghanistan” and included a visual depiction of Robert Fico wearing a hijab accompanied by the slogan “Fico’s vision for Slovakia”. Although primarily presented as criticism of foreign policy orientation, the imagery and framing associated Muslim identity, Afghanistan and migration with insecurity and political decline.

In this atmosphere, Milan Mazurek, Member of the European Parliament and representative of the far-right Republika movement, [published](#) a video warning that Robert Fico’s policies would allegedly bring “150,000 Muslims” to Slovakia. In the video, Mazurek claimed that the government planned to import large numbers of foreign workers, including migrants from Uzbekistan, as cheap labour instead of improving wages for Slovak workers. The video portrayed Muslim migration as a civilizational and demographic threat and framed migration as incompatible with Slovak national interests.

Representatives of the Sme Rodina movement also publicly entered the migration debate. Boris Kollár, former Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, together with party

representatives [commented](#) publicly on migration-related issues and foreign labour policy during ongoing public debates concerning migration and Muslims.

Throughout the second half of 2025, anti-Muslim rhetoric increasingly focused on themes connected to the alleged “Islamization” of Europe, demographic replacement and security fears associated with migration. Milan Uhrík, Member of the European Parliament and chairman of the Republika movement, [published](#) a video criticizing environmental regulations and progressive politics while simultaneously mocking halal food practices associated with Muslims. In the accompanying text and comments, Uhrík rejected the possibility of halal meat being served in Slovak restaurants and referred to Muslims in a dismissive and derogatory manner, linking Muslims together with broader anti-progressive political narratives.

Far-right narratives concerning migration and Islam also continued through social media videos published by Marián Kotleba, former chairman of the far-right LSNS party and former governor of the Banská Bystrica region, and Milan Mazurek. Kotleba [published](#) a video discussing migrants in Banská Bystrica while portraying migration primarily through a security-oriented lens. Later in October, Mazurek [released](#) additional anti-Muslim content on Instagram focusing on demographic fears and “Islamization” narratives.

In November 2025, Mazurek also [shared](#) another migration-related video concerning Christmas markets in Europe and alleged security threats connected to migrants and Muslims. Such narratives mirrored broader European far-right rhetoric portraying Muslim migration as incompatible with European cultural identity and public safety.

During the second half of the year, Romana Tabak, former Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, repeatedly [published](#) anti-migration and anti-Muslim content on Facebook. Later in November, she also [called for](#) legal restrictions targeting Islamic clothing such as burqas. In December 2025, Tabak again [shared](#) anti-migration and anti-Muslim narratives on social media.

Public criticism also emerged following statements associated with Milan Majerský, chairman of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), which critics perceived as contributing to anti-Muslim rhetoric and broader anti-migration narratives within Slovak political discourse. Project N later [reported](#) on the public controversy.

At the same time, several civil society organizations, journalists and human rights advocates publicly criticized the normalization of anti-Muslim rhetoric in Slovak politics. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia repeatedly condemned inflammatory statements targeting Muslims and warned against the long-term social consequences of fear-based political communication. Nevertheless, the continued visibility of anti-Muslim narratives among political actors during 2025 demonstrated that Islamophobia remained an important instrument of political mobilization within parts of the Slovak political landscape.

## Media, Public Discourse and Online Islamophobia

In addition to political rhetoric, anti-Muslim narratives in Slovakia during 2025 were also reinforced through mainstream commercial communication, online media environments, viral social media content and public cultural discourse. Islamophobic stereotypes and fear-based narratives were not limited exclusively to political actors but increasingly appeared in commercial campaigns, influencer content, online misinformation and broader public communication.

One of the first public controversies of the year emerged in February 2025 in connection with content published by the retail chain Kaufland. Members of the Muslim community and anti-racism activists criticized material associated with the campaign for relying on stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Muslims. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia publicly [responded](#) to the incident and warned against the normalization of ethnic and cultural stereotyping in mainstream public communication. The controversy demonstrated how anti-Arab imagery and orientalist caricatures continue to appear within commercial environments without broader public sensitivity toward their discriminatory implications. Kaufland later apologized.

Public controversy also emerged in June 2025 in relation to social media communication published by the Slovak travel agency BUBO. The company [promoted](#) the experience of its founder Luboš Fellner, who described entering Mecca despite not being Muslim and presented himself as potentially “the last visitor of his kind” able to do so. The promotional framing of the pilgrimage city of Mecca and the Hajj period generated criticism among some Muslims and commentators, who viewed the communication as disrespectful toward one of the holiest places in Islam. The controversy illustrated broader tensions concerning the commercialization and exoticization of Islamic religious spaces within travel marketing and online media culture.

Another significant controversy occurred in May 2025 following criticism directed at a publication associated with the organization IPčko, a well-known Slovak mental health and prevention NGO. The publication reportedly discussed the Muslim headscarf within the context of radicalization and extremism. Representatives of the Muslim community and anti-discrimination advocates criticized this framing and warned that associating visible Islamic religious identity with radicalization contributes to stigmatization of Muslim women and reinforces broader social suspicion toward Muslims. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia publicly [criticized](#) the publication and emphasized the harmful consequences of presenting Islamic symbols primarily through a security-oriented lens.

Throughout 2025, social media platforms continued to play a central role in spreading anti-Muslim narratives and misinformation. Viral short-form videos and emotionally charged posts frequently portrayed Muslims and migrants as threats to European identity, security and social stability. Such content often relied on fear-based messaging, misleading context or entirely unverified claims designed to provoke emotional reactions and increase online engagement.

In November 2025, a widely shared viral video claimed that migrants or pro-Palestinian demonstrators had destroyed a statue of Jesus in Europe. The claim circulated widely on Slovak social media despite the absence of factual evidence supporting the story. The post linked anti-migrant narratives, anti-Muslim sentiment and public fears surrounding pro-Palestinian demonstrations into a single emotionally charged disinformation narrative. The incident illustrated how false or misleading information involving Christianity and migration was increasingly weaponized to provoke hostility toward Muslims and migrants.

Online narratives warning about the alleged “Islamization” of Europe also remained highly visible throughout the year. In November 2025, Slovak conservative influencer and online commentator Livia Pavlíková [shared](#) video content focused on themes of demographic replacement, migration and Islamization. Similar narratives frequently portrayed Muslims not as individuals living within Slovak society, but as a collective civilizational threat connected to migration and cultural transformation in Europe.

## Civic Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

Efforts to counter Islamophobia and promote greater understanding of Muslims in Slovakia continued throughout 2025 despite an increasingly polarized political and social climate. Civil society organizations, journalists, academics and members of the Muslim community remained active in responding to anti-Muslim rhetoric, supporting interfaith dialogue and raising awareness about discrimination targeting Muslims and migrants.

The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia continued to play the central role in monitoring anti-Muslim incidents and public discourse throughout the year. In addition to documenting cases of hate speech and discriminatory narratives, the Foundation regularly responded to public incidents involving anti-Muslim rhetoric on social media and in political communication. The organization repeatedly warned against the normalization of hostility toward Muslims and emphasized the broader social consequences of fear-based political mobilization.

One of the most significant public interfaith events organized by the Muslim community in 2025 was the ceremonial Ramadan iftar dinner held in the Mirror Hall of the Primate’s Palace in Bratislava. The event was organized by representatives of the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia together with imam Mohamad Safwan Hasna and brought together guests from different religious communities, diplomatic circles, public institutions and civil society. Among the participants were Matúš Vallo, the Mayor of Bratislava, and Juraj Droba, Chairman of the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, alongside several ambassadors and the Apostolic Nuncio to Slovakia, Archbishop Nicola Girasoli. Slovak political analyst and former diplomat Pavol Demeš publicly [described](#) the event as dignified, welcoming and important for interfaith coexistence.

The symbolic importance of the event was particularly significant within the Slovak context. In a country where Islam still lacks official state recognition and where anti-Muslim

rhetoric remains common in political discourse, the presence of senior political representatives, diplomats and religious leaders at a public Ramadan event represented an important gesture of inclusion and civic recognition toward the Muslim community. The event also demonstrated ongoing efforts by Slovak Muslims to present Islam through openness, dialogue and participation in public life rather than isolation from wider society.

Educational and public outreach activities also continued during 2025. Representatives of the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia participated in discussions, lectures and educational events focused on religion, migration, intercultural dialogue and the everyday lives of Muslims in Slovakia. Public educational efforts remained especially important in an environment where misinformation and stereotypes about Islam continued to circulate widely online and in political debate.

The Córdoba cultural centre in Bratislava remained an important space for community life, interfaith dialogue and educational activities. The centre continued organizing public events, discussions and opportunities for non-Muslim visitors to learn more about Islam and the Muslim community in Slovakia. Such activities aimed to reduce prejudice through direct personal contact and open communication.

An important role during 2025 was also played by the Public Defender of Rights, Róbert Dobrovodský. Although no concrete legal action concerning the religious registration law was initiated during the year, the Ombudsman continued showing interest in the broader issue of equal treatment of religious minorities and publicly indicated willingness to examine aspects of the restrictive registration framework affecting Muslims and other minority faiths. His office also remained active in monitoring the treatment of foreigners and detained individuals within Slovak institutions, including inspections related to detention conditions affecting migrants and foreigners from Muslim-majority countries. Within the broader Slovak environment, such engagement by the Ombudsman represented one of the few examples of institutional attention directed toward the rights and dignity of vulnerable minority communities.

Civil society actors and anti-discrimination advocates also continued drawing attention to problematic political rhetoric targeting migrants and Muslims. Several public commentators, journalists and activists criticized attempts to portray Muslims as a demographic or civilizational threat and warned against the growing normalization of xenophobic narratives in Slovak political culture. Human rights advocates further highlighted the dangers of misinformation spreading through social media, particularly content linking migrants and Muslims to violence or insecurity without factual basis.

At the political level, however, no major initiative aimed at improving the institutional status of Muslims or reforming the restrictive religious registration system emerged during 2025. Compared to the previous year, public discussion regarding legal reform remained relatively limited, while migration-related political polarization became significantly more visible. As a result, much of the practical work countering Islamophobia continued to depend primarily on civil society organizations, independent media and community initiatives rather than state institutions or broader political consensus.

Despite the persistence of anti-Muslim rhetoric and structural barriers, these activities continued to provide important counter-narratives within Slovak society. Educational outreach, interfaith dialogue, public advocacy and community engagement remained essential tools for challenging stereotypes, supporting social cohesion and promoting a more inclusive understanding of religious and cultural diversity in Slovakia.

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The year 2025 confirmed that Islamophobia remains a persistent and structurally embedded problem within Slovak society. Although Slovakia continues to have one of the smallest Muslim populations in the European Union, anti-Muslim rhetoric remained highly visible within political communication, social media discourse and public debates concerning migration, security and national identity. Muslims and migrants from Muslim-majority countries were frequently portrayed not as individuals or members of a religious minority, but rather as symbolic representations of broader political anxieties connected to demographic change, globalization and European migration trends.

A particularly important development during 2025 was the growing visibility of labour migration from Muslim-majority countries, especially from Central Asia as well as India and Bangladesh. Slovakia's labour shortages increasingly connected the country to migration dynamics previously associated mainly with Western Europe. This demographic change became a frequent subject of political debate and online mobilization, with several politicians and public figures portraying Muslim migrants as a cultural or civilizational threat. Public discourse often framed the increasing presence of Muslim workers through fear-based narratives about "Islamization", despite the relatively small size of the Muslim community in Slovakia.

Social media continued to function as the primary environment for the spread of anti-Muslim rhetoric. Facebook and Instagram were repeatedly used for the dissemination of inflammatory videos, misleading claims and dehumanizing narratives targeting Muslims and migrants. Politicians associated with nationalist and far-right movements continued using Islamophobic rhetoric as a political mobilization tool, particularly in discussions related to migration and demographic change. Such communication contributed to the normalization of hostility toward Muslims within parts of Slovak public discourse.

At the same time, the structural legal marginalization of Islam remained unresolved. Slovakia continued to maintain one of the most restrictive systems of religious registration in Europe, effectively preventing Islam from obtaining official state recognition. Muslims in Slovakia therefore remained excluded from institutional rights available to registered religious communities, including equal legal recognition and the possibility to develop religious institutions under the same conditions as officially registered churches.

Despite these challenges, important positive initiatives continued throughout 2025. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia remained active in monitoring anti-Muslim incidents, organizing educational activities and promoting interfaith dialogue. Public events such as the Ramadan iftar dinner held in the Mirror Hall of the Primate's Palace in Bratislava demonstrated ongoing efforts to strengthen inclusion, dialogue and mutual understanding between Muslims and the wider Slovak public. The participation of senior political representatives, diplomats and religious leaders in such events represented an important symbolic gesture within a society where anti-Muslim rhetoric remains politically visible.

The findings of this report underline the need for long-term and systematic efforts aimed at protecting religious freedom, reducing prejudice and strengthening democratic resilience in Slovakia. Addressing Islamophobia requires action not only against explicit hate speech and discrimination, but also against the normalization of narratives portraying Muslims and migrants as collective threats to society.

Meaningful progress will require reform of the restrictive religious registration framework in order to ensure equal treatment for minority religious communities, including Muslims. Public officials and political representatives should refrain from exploiting anti-Muslim and anti-migration rhetoric for political mobilization and should instead promote responsible and fact-based public discourse. Greater attention should also be devoted to combating online hate speech and misinformation targeting Muslims, migrants and other minority groups.

Educational institutions, media organizations and civil society actors continue to play a crucial role in preventing prejudice and promoting social cohesion. Supporting educational initiatives focused on religious literacy, intercultural dialogue and critical media awareness remains essential in countering stereotypes and conspiracy narratives surrounding Islam and migration. Continued support for community-based dialogue projects and public engagement initiatives can further contribute to building trust and reducing fear between different communities within Slovak society.

Finally, accessible reporting mechanisms and stronger institutional support for victims of hate speech, discrimination and xenophobic violence remain necessary for ensuring that Muslims and other minorities are able to fully exercise their rights and participate safely in public life. The persistence of Islamophobic rhetoric throughout 2025 demonstrates that protecting democratic values, equality and religious freedom remains an ongoing challenge requiring consistent attention from state institutions, civil society and political leaders alike.

## Chronology

Chronological list of selected public cases of anti-Muslim rhetoric, Islamophobic discourse and related incidents in Slovakia during 2025:

**13/02/2025:** Public controversy emerged following online content connected to the retail chain Kaufland that was criticized for stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Muslims. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia publicly [responded](#) to the incident and criticized the normalization of anti-Arab stereotypes in Slovak public communication.

**05/2025:** Public criticism emerged regarding a publication associated with the organization IPčko in which the Muslim headscarf was discussed in connection with radicalization and extremism. Representatives of the Muslim community warned that such framing contributes to stigmatization of visible Muslim identity and reinforces stereotypes portraying Muslims primarily through a security lens. The Islamic Foundation in Slovakia publicly [criticized](#) the publication.

**07/06/2025:** Public debate emerged following social media communication published by the Slovak travel agency BUBO concerning founder Ľuboš Fellner's visit to Mecca despite not being Muslim. Critics viewed the communication as disrespectful toward one of the holiest places in Islam and as an example of commercialization and exoticization of Islamic religious spaces ([Facebook](#)).

**08/06/2025:** Jana Bittó Cigániková, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, [published](#) a Facebook post criticizing legislation concerning religious access to hospitalized patients. The post warned that “a Muslim imam” could allegedly enter hospitals without patient consent and portrayed Muslim religious representatives as a source of concern and insecurity.

**13/06/2025:** Jaroslav Naď, former Minister of Defence and chairman of the Democrats party, [published](#) a post criticizing possible geopolitical cooperation with Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The post included imagery depicting Robert Fico wearing a hijab and framed Afghanistan and Muslim-majority countries within narratives of insecurity and political danger. Naď later also addressed the issue on [Instagram](#).

**14/06/2025:** Milan Mazurek, Member of the European Parliament and representative of the far-right Republika movement, [published](#) a video warning that Robert Fico's policies would allegedly bring “150,000 Muslims” to Slovakia. The video portrayed Muslim migration as a demographic and civilizational threat and criticized the import of foreign workers from countries such as Uzbekistan.

**17/06/2025:** Boris Kollár, former Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, together with representatives of the Sme Rodina movement, [commented](#) publicly on

migration-related issues and foreign labour policy during ongoing public debates concerning migration and Muslims.

**18/08/2025:** Milan Uhrík, Member of the European Parliament and chairman of the Republika movement, [published](#) a video mocking halal food practices associated with Muslims and rejecting the possibility of halal meat being served in Slovak restaurants.

**06/10/2025:** Marián Kotleba, former chairman of the far-right LSNS party and former governor of the Banská Bystrica region, [published](#) a video discussing migrants in Banská Bystrica while portraying migration primarily through a security-oriented narrative.

**23/10/2025:** Milan Mazurek [released](#) additional anti-Muslim and anti-migration content on Instagram focusing on themes of demographic replacement and “Islamization” of Europe.

**04/11/2025:** Milan Mazurek [shared](#) a migration-related video concerning Christmas markets in Europe and alleged security threats connected to migrants and Muslims.

**07/11/2025:** Slovak conservative influencer Livia Pavlíková [shared](#) video content focused on themes of “Islamization”, migration and demographic change in Europe.

**11/2025:** Viral social media content [spread](#) false claims alleging that migrants or pro-Palestinian demonstrators had destroyed a statue of Jesus in Europe. The story circulated despite the absence of factual evidence and linked anti-migrant and anti-Muslim narratives with fears surrounding pro-Palestinian protests.

**19/11/2025:** Romana Tabak, former Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, [published](#) anti-migration and anti-Muslim content on Facebook.

**26/11/2025:** Romana Tabak [called for](#) legal restrictions targeting Islamic clothing such as burqas.

**12/12/2025:** Public criticism emerged following statements associated with Milan Majerský, chairman of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), which critics perceived as contributing to anti-Muslim rhetoric and broader anti-migration narratives within Slovak political discourse. Project N later [reported](#) on the controversy.

**22/12/2025:** Romana Tabak again [shared](#) anti-migration and anti-Muslim narratives on social media.