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## Understanding The Human Rights Discrimination of South Korea Muslims

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### Abstract

This research analyzes discrimination against Muslims in South Korea, a country known to be advanced in terms of technology and economy. Various factors influence this discrimination, including anti-Islam propaganda, lack of understanding about Islam, and incidents of religious-based terrorism in the world. In the last few years, namely 2018-2023, human rights discrimination against the Muslim community in South Korea has become a public concern. In South Korea, discrimination against Muslims leads to human rights violations and hatred. The complexity of this problem is further strengthened by the interaction of various factors, social changes, and the dynamics of life in South Korea. This research uses a qualitative approach and case studies to understand this phenomenon from the perspective of perpetrators and victims of discrimination, involving local South Korean residents and Muslims living in South Korea. The results of the research show that there is a significant influence from various parties which influences the occurrence of direct and indirect acts of human rights discrimination against Muslims in South Korea, impacting the human rights of Muslims living in South Korea.

**Keywords : Discrimination, Muslims in South Korea, Human Rights.**

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini menganalisis disharmonies terhadap Muslim di Korea Selatan, negara yang dikenal maju dalam hal teknologi dan ekonomi. Berbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi diskriminasi ini, termasuk propaganda anti-Islam, kurangnya pemahaman tentang Islam, dan peristiwa terorisme berbasis agama di dunia. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir yaitu tahun 2018-2023 diskriminasi hak asasi manusia terhadap komunitas Muslim di Korea Selatan menjadi perhatian publik. Di Korea Selatan, diskriminasi terhadap Muslim menyebabkan pelanggaran hak asasi manusia serta kebencian. Kompleksitas masalah ini semakin diperkuat oleh interaksi berbagai faktor, perubahan sosial, dan dinamika kehidupan di Korea Selatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan studi kasus untuk memahami fenomena ini dari sudut pandang pelaku dan korban diskriminasi yaitu melibatkan warga lokal Korea Selatan dan warga Muslim yang tinggal di Korea Selatan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat pengaruh signifikan dari berbagai pihak tersebut yang mempengaruhi terjadinya tindak diskriminasi hak asasi manusia secara langsung dan tidak langsung*





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*terhadap Muslim di Korea Selatan sehingga berdampak pada HAM Muslim yang tinggal di Korea Selatan.*

***Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi, Muslim di Korea Selatan, Hak Asasi Manusia.***

## **Introduction**

South Korea is known for its rapid economic growth and quite advanced technological progress. Hence, the community also faces a new challenge in

inequality and discrimination against minority groups, including the Muslim community living in South Korea. South Korea is a democratic country which constitution protects human right, including freedom in religion, which includes the freedom to worship according to one's religion and personal beliefs. (Junseok, 2021).

However, in recent years, South Korea has become the world's attention because of discrimination against Muslims, which occurs in various forms, such as hate speech and physical violence. South Korea's identity as a democratic country that upholds human rights has been questioned by various parties. That South Korean people often post hate speech against Muslims, both on social media and directly, such as demeaning, inciting or threatening.

They also commit physical violence against Muslims, such as assault and harassment. There is also a rejection of religious practices that Muslims in South Korea often experience rejection of their religious practices. For example, they are prohibited from praying in public places or wearing the hijab at work or school. Differences in treatment in public services also occur, namely Muslims in South Korea are often treated unfairly in restaurants and shops. For example, they are suspicious or do not receive services. (Junseok, 2021).

In South Korea, discrimination against Muslims has invited criticism from various parties, such as human rights organizations and the Muslim community. The South Korean government has made efforts to overcome the problem of discrimination and racism, namely issuing a law prohibiting hate speech and discrimination against minority groups, including Muslims.

Because of prohibition against discrimination in 2016, government of South Korea now enforces the Equalization of Opportunities and Protection from Discrimination Act (Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination and Promotion of Equality). The aim of this law is to ensure the equality of opportunity and protection from discrimination based on religion, gender, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race and origin. (Pratama, 2023). This law prohibits discrimination in the workplace, education and public services. There are also public authorities tasked with processing complaints about discrimination and providing help and support to victims of discrimination. Although there are laws prohibiting discrimination in Korea, there are still many difficulties in enforcing them, including a lack of awareness of individual rights and limited resources to address discrimination issues. Therefore, greater efforts are still needed to raise awareness and protect individual rights against discrimination in Korea.

Religious life in South Korea is peaceful, but because Islam still seems very foreign to the country, the interaction between residents is not good enough. Thus, there are still several cases of





discrimination against religious minorities, such as Muslims. In the period 2018 to 2023, seen from data from the South Korean Ministry of Home Affairs, there was a significant increase in the South Korean Muslim population. Their numbers continue to increase and are expected to reach around 200,000 people in 2022 to 2023, a fairly large increase in five years. (Korea, 2023). However, this increase also raises new challenges regarding the views or ways in which South Korean society sees and accepts Islam. Thus, acts of discrimination against Islam also emerged in South Korea, as happened in the world. (Sajid, 2019).

South Korea is a country that has ratified various covenants on human rights such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). (Kim Sungwook, 2022). However, as previously mentioned, cases of discrimination against Muslims in South Korea show that South Korea's human rights policies do not fully comply with international human rights law. Acts of discrimination that occur in South Korea show that South Korean citizens and the South Korean government could not provide a sense of security to minority groups, including Muslims, who are targets of discrimination by residents there.

Discrimination against Muslims in South Korea can endanger the political stability and security of South Korea because it causes various adverse consequences, such as an increased sense of injustice and hatred among Muslims, which can increase conflict or violence between groups. As time goes by, South Korea is increasingly becoming a concern of the public and various parties, which can have a negative impact on its relations with other countries. (Korea, 2023). This is quite important to research because it increases public awareness about the importance of tolerance and intercultural understanding, thus making the author analyze why acts of discrimination against Muslims occur in South Korea.

## **Framework Analytics**

In analyzing this, the author will use the theories of Constructivism and Islamophobia:

### **Constructivism Theory**

This theory focuses on the fact that social reality has a nature that is not fixed but is formed through the interaction of social actors and the meaning they give in certain situations. Alexander Wendt highlighted that relations between countries and the dynamics of the international system are not only determined through material interests but also include social construction and interpretation of meaning. Wendt emphasizes the central role of ideas and identity, that foreign policy and state actions are not only driven by material interests but also by beliefs and norms that develop in society.

Country identity and self-perception can play an important role in shaping actions and policies. (Wendt, 1995). Actors' identities and interests are strongly influenced by perceptions. Factors such as an actor's experience, knowledge, and values can influence how the actor sees things. Actors' identities and interests are not natural or aim. Rather, they are shaped by actors' perceptions of their environment. In Constructivism, human rights (HAM) are social constructions that are formed through a process of interaction between international actors. Human rights are not objective and universal but relative and can change over time and the social context within them.





South Korean Muslim identity is shaped by interactions between the Muslim community, the media, and the public. (Wicaksana, 2018). Here, we can determine how Muslim identity is shaped by interactions between South Korean government institutions, Muslim communities, and local society. That there are stereotypes or negative ideas about Islam that impact the way South Korean people view and interact with the Muslim community (Wicaksana, 2018). The main concept in Constructivism theory reveals that social reality is not only fixed or given, but is constructed by social actors. Both from states, non-state actors and community groups who can form beliefs, norms and shared meanings through their interactions. (Thomas Luckmann, 1996).

In this theory, there is something that is emphasized, namely a negative social construction that can quickly penetrate society. The results show that there are discriminatory practices that occur and are part of this social construction, which has an influence on relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in society. Muslim identity in South Korea and national identity in South Korea can create complex dynamics.

Misperceptions arise when international actors misunderstand each other's identities, interests, or actions. This can be caused by various factors, namely lack of information that actors may not have enough information about each other, there is misinformation that actors may receive misleading information about each other. Stereotypes and prejudices that actors have negative stereotypes or prejudices towards each other and cultural differences that actors have different cultures and values, which can cause misunderstandings.

Wendt argues that misperception occurs when actors have different identities and interests. When actors have similar personalities and interests, they understand each other better. Misperceptions can have a negative impact on international relations, including conflict, which can cause misunderstandings about each other's actions and increase the risk of conflict.

## **Islamophobia**

Islamophobia is an excessive fear that does not have a strong basis for thinking about Islam, and can even be described as making it up. The term Islamophobia refers to fear of Islam or controversialism, which refers to prejudice and discrimination against Islam. There is no truth in it, only prejudice that comes from the persistent bad perception that people have towards Islam. (Firdaus, 2011).

At the international forum against intolerance in Stockholm in January 2001, the term was used to describe intolerance. (Mcgowan, 2004). The Runnymede Trust, the British Anti-Semitism Commission, provides a definition of Islamophobia, which has been widely accepted by people who agree with the existence of Islamophobia that "Islamophobia is the shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam and, therefore to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims."

Islamophobia is a short term that refers to the fear or hatred of the Islamic religion, and therefore, this fear or dislike is directed towards all people of the Islamic faith. (Freedman, 2005). Islamophobia is an attempt to restore and confirm a system of discrimination against Muslims throughout the world, where inequality in the distribution of resources persists and is increasing. This will have a significant negative impact on Muslim human rights (HAM). Islamophobia can occur directly as physical or non-physical attacks on Muslim people and property associated with Islam.





In certain cases, Islamophobia can also take the form of intimidation and discrimination in public settings where Muslims are considered worse than non-Muslims. (Sayyid, 2014). Some reasons underlying Islamophobia are ignorance about Islam, anti-Islam propaganda, terrorist incidents, geopolitical competition and conservatism.

## **Method**

To explain Islamophobia in South Korea: Discrimination on Muslim Human Rights in South Korea 2018-2023, this research uses a qualitative approach, namely organizing and analyzing data, to find meaningful patterns and themes to produce a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon being studied. Here, we examine the phenomenon of discrimination against Muslims in South Korea from the perspective of the perpetrators and victims of discrimination as a case study, which presents several facts that reveal that there are cases of acts of discrimination performed by residents against Muslims in South Korea.

The data collection technique used by the author is library research, namely by collecting data by reviewing much literature related to the problem being studied. Collect documents related to the phenomenon being studied as news articles, research reports, or statutory regulations. The type of data used by the author is secondary data collection got from various literature as books, journals, documents, newspapers, the internet which is closely related to the problem that there are numerous factors that give rise to discrimination against Islam and Muslims in South Korea. In terms of time limits, researchers took a year where negative perceptions towards Muslims in South Korea were increasingly strong, namely an event in 2018 which sparked controversy and strengthened the negative perspective of South Koreans towards Islam until 2023 which was the deadline for the research.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Ignorance of Islam and anti-Islam propaganda in South Korea**

South Korean society is known as a homogenous society and has a fairly high sense of nationalism. The number of people of non-Korean ethnicity is tiny (Gholami, 2021). South Korean people deeply respect their shared culture and ethnicity. The strong influence of South Korean culture is also one thing that causes South Korean people to be less interested in studying other religions, including Islam. (Gholami, 2021).

Korean people believe they come from the same country, race and ethnicity. So they emphasize the idea that they come from the same lineage. This belief makes Korean people feel different from non-Korean people. (Gholami, 2021). The identity of South Korean citizens is also influenced by politics. As a democratic country, its citizens may participate in the political process, which encourages them to feel like active and responsible citizens. The cultural identity of South Korean people is very strong, which is reflected in various aspects of their lives, such as language, art, music and food.

This condition could create a problem if faced with increasing globalization and international migration because of South Korea's economic progress and making it a migration destination country.





In this era of increasingly advanced globalization, homogeneity will become a problem in social cohesion. This is mainly related to the very strong Korean identity.

According to Korean society, Korean ethnic nationalism is a source of shared pride and this causes Korean society to have negative prejudice towards people from other ethnicities, including Muslim communities. With the influx of various foreign cultures into South Korea, it became a social problem caused by differences in thought patterns and not knowing each other about each other's teachings. As happened to Muslims in South Korea, who are a minority community. South Korea's majority identity often creates and reinforces cultural norms that reflect their own traditions, values and norms, which increasingly put pressure on minority groups. (Jung, 2017).

Population of foreigners in South Korea is quite diverse, with Chinese citizens dominating up to 45%. The entry of many foreign cultures brought numerous changes, one of which was social problems caused by differences in thought patterns and a lack of understanding between cultures. The younger generation in South Korea, who are exposed to foreign cultures, such as Western lifestyles coming from the United States, often have a different mindset than the older generation who prioritize the traditional values of South Korean culture itself. The influx of numerous foreigners also creates a lack of understanding between cultures, which gives rise to stereotypes and discrimination against foreigners. Foreign culture will also provide differences in the moral values of South Korean culture, giving rise to debate and moral disagreement in society.

**Table 1**  
**Status of the Foreign Population in South Korea in 2019**

<b>Population status of foreign nationals by nationality</b>	<b>Percentage amount</b>
Mongolian citizen	2%
Nepali citizen	2.2%
Indonesian citizens	2.3%
Cambodian citizen	2.7%
Filipino citizen	2.8%
Citizen of Uzbekistan	3.5%
United States Citizen	4.0%
Thai citizen	9.1%
Vietnamese citizen	10.2%
Chinese citizens (including Koreans)	45.2%
Other	16%

Source: Korean Statistical Institute, <https://id.korean-culture>, 2019.

In aspects of community life, there are different treatments experienced by religious foreigners living in South Korea, namely that there are differences experienced by foreigners who are Muslim, Christian and Buddhist. This difference can be seen in terms of accessibility such as food and places of worship, but foreigners who are Christians and Buddhists are well received by South





Korean society because they share the same religion. Foreigners who are Christians and Buddhists will find it easier to find places of worship that are widespread in South Korea.

Foreigners who are Muslim face numerous challenges in finding places of worship and the food they want to consume. One of the Indonesian Muslims living in South Korea wrote on the website tokopu. corp. in June 2023 that as a Muslim living in South Korea, finding halal food is always a challenge. This is caused by the lack of halal ingredients there. (Christie, 2023). In fact, according to Hansol himself, the definition of halal is not something that South Korean people know.

Apart from that, finding a suitable place of worship is still quite difficult. (Christie, 2023). South Korea's culture of drinking alcohol is an important way to open up and get to know new people. A Muslim living in South Korea may be left out of the inside jokes and bonds that have developed between people who often go out drinking together. According to the people of South Korea, because the number of Muslims is small and there are many cultural differences, they do not want to learn about Islam and do not create enough places of worship for Muslims to use.(Christie, 2023).

Most people in South Korea consider Islam to be a foreign religion practiced by foreigners. In Korea, Islam is foreign because few South Koreans understand Islamic teachings and practices. (Jungyun Kim, 2012). Most South Korea's population is Christian, Buddhist and non-religious. This is the reason that few South Korean people understand the teachings of Islam.

The strong influence of Confucian culture in South Korea makes South Korean people believe Islam is a foreign religion because this culture emphasizes harmony and togetherness within one ethnicity. Confucianism was the official religion of the Joseon dynasty in 1392–1910, emphasizing the principles of loyalty and respect for ancestors. Ideas from Confucianism were used by the Joseon Dynasty to create a code of ethics that governed the daily life and culture of society, such as servants' loyalty to the king, children working diligently and taking good care of their parents, principles that should be applied in home relationships ladder. (Center, 2015).

In South Korean Confucian culture, there are several norms that can influence the lives of Korean people within it. (Jungyun Kim, 2012). First, the norm of order is that everyone has the same potential and is equally so that the positive elements of Confucianism will not be eliminated or suppressed by a system of power. Second, the norm of discipline is that society not only remembers discipline but also has to do it. Third, the norm of harmony is that society can live in harmony. Fourth, moral responsibility, in contemporary South Korea, Confucianism cannot be separated because many of its characteristics have been carried over to the present generation into nationalist and Communist doctrines, principles, ethos, public opinion, and bureaucratic structures. Fifth, South Korean Confucianism teaches people must be highly educated so that they can help their country and society. So, South Korean people are not interested in studying other religions, including Islam.

They trust and accept the mass media, which provides information about Islam and Muslims whose truth is unknown, resulting in misunderstandings. This misunderstanding causes bad prejudice from South Korean society towards Muslims living in South Korea. That 35.8% of South Korean people in the anti-Islam rumor survey answered they accept content from the media as it is without determining the truth.

Several studies and articles also highlight the prevalence of negative attitudes towards Islam and Islamophobia in South Korea, which is getting higher in 2021. Such as a survey of the level of





Islamophobia and the impact of anti-Islam rumors in South Korean society conducted by one of the foreign studies students at Hankook University in January 2021 using online panel services in an open survey. (Lee, 2021).

The number of participants who participated was 204, with 119 men and 85 women. There were 13.7% of that age group in their twenties, 30.8% in their thirties, 27% in their forties, 21.6% in their fifties, and 3% in their sixties and over. Among those who participated, 56.4% did not adhere to any religion, 17.2% Protestant, 14.7% Buddhist, 11.3% Catholic, and 0.5% other. This survey was conducted to determine the level of Islamophobia and the impact of anti-Islam rumors on South Korean society. The following is a survey of the level of Islamophobia and the impact of anti-Islam rumors in South Korean society conducted in January 2021.

**Table 2**

**Survey the level of Islamophobia and the impact of anti-Islam rumors in South Korean society**

Survey Questions	Respondent's Answer		
How do you access the news to find out about big issues in Korea or the world?	77% use NAVER or DAUM portals.		10.8% use YouTube.
Regarding Islamophobic discourse.	69.1% answered badly.		28.4% answered very bad. 2.5% answered good.
What is your attitude towards negative information about Islam or Muslims?	35.8% answered that they accept content from the media as it is without checking the truth.	11.3% answered reading it just because they were curious.	38.7% answered that they never doubted the facts. 14.2% answered that they always doubted the content whether or not it was true.
What is the image of Islam and Muslims?	55.4% answered that the image of Muslims is very negative.		43.6% answered that the image of Islam is very negative.

Source: Kyungsoo Lee, <http://dx.doi.org/10.33526/EJKS.20212101.291>, 2021.







The survey above was conducted on January 11, 2021, which shows that South Korean society views Islam with a negative perception that still exists today. Lack of exposure to Islam is one factor that causes South Korean society's lack of knowledge and understanding about Islam. Most South Koreans are not religious, meaning they have no direct experience or knowledge of a religion, including Islam. The minority of Muslims in South Korea means that most local South Koreans rarely interact with Muslims in everyday life.

This shows that the representation of Islam by the Korean mass media has contributed to negative impressions and misunderstandings about Islam in the country. Korean media also stated that Muslims are a group of religious fanatics who spread a lot of terror. As in the case of a South Korean newspaper called Chosun Ilbo, a Korean daily newspaper which is quite famous and the oldest in South Korea, in 2018 it published that Islam is a religion of violence and Muslims are a threat to national security. (Koo, 2018).

In particular, Korea's well-known daily newspaper, Hankyoreh, reported that the headquarters of the Esther Prayer Movement (EPMH), a right-wing Protestant Christian fundamentalist group, had been producing and spreading misinformation. (Koo, 2018). Fundamental Protestant Christians and right-wing political groups have spread rumors of fake news articles aimed at inciting public hatred against certain groups, including Muslims, refugees, and social minority groups in South Korea. Such as fake news about a religion created by leading Christian newspapers or radio platforms, such as Kūktong pangsong (radio station), Kungmin ilbo (daily newspaper) or Kidok ilbo (Christian daily), publishing articles based on biased foreign articles without checking their veracity. (Joy, 2021). This problem is made worse because Korean churches are influenced by these media and the people within it are also affected.

The newspaper Nyusū aen choi (News and Joy) reported that the three -mass media changed foreign writing to appear different from its original purpose or chose a biased perspective from the original writing. Conservative Christians then used these articles to stir up anti-Islam feelings by changing the facts and writing new stories. (Joy, 2021). In the last five years, it was stated by the newspaper Nyusū aen choi (News and Joy) that unfounded rumors such as conspiracy theories about a Muslim invasion of Korean society continued to spread widely.

The issues faced by Yemeni refugees have also become a topic of discussion among South Korean society, which has gone beyond the existing anti-Islam debate. Some of them have criticized patriarchal Muslim social practices, such as the hijab, polygamy, and early marriage. In the end, for South Koreans who believe in Islamophobic rumors, Muslims will be portrayed as invaders who threaten society and Muslim men who threaten Korean women. As in a survey conducted by Jungang Ilbo, which was conducted on 1 and 2 August 2018, it was revealed that the negative response of society towards refugees who were not Muslim was 44.7% and the negative response was quite high at 66.6%, especially towards Muslim refugees. (Yu, 2018).

As experienced by a local Muslim South Korean citizen, he said that he faced various problems when he had to serve in the military for two years. (Darynaufal, 2022). He struggles to find time to pray fast during Ramadan and get halal food. The young man only called himself a Muslim "in his heart" during his military tenure and was afraid to tell his colleagues about it. The South Korean people's ignorance regarding the teachings and practices of Islam, conducted by a survey





through the Korean Broadcasting System Research Center, stated that approximately 60% agreed that they did not know about Islam.

It is recognized by Muslim residents in South Korea that there are several obstacles to conducting their daily activities, both at work and in their social life. Among them are several problems with Muslim workers who complain about various problems. Problems with food, drink, clothing and the stigma of terrorism are things they face in everyday life, which is quite a burden on the Muslim residents who live there. South Korea's stigma towards Muslim identity in South Korea is quite strong, because it is included in the category of Islamophobia. This causes discriminatory attitudes and hatred towards Islam and Muslims.

It is increasingly difficult to establish good interactions because the South Korean people believe more about Islam from the mass media. Anti-Islam propaganda in South Korea is also the cause of the South Korean people's increasing ignorance about the truth of the Islamic religion. This is an attempt to spread hatred and fear towards Muslims through various types of media, such as mass media, social media, and extremist groups.

One thing experienced by Muslim students in South Korea who came from Malaysia was registered as students at Hanyang University in Korea, experiencing unpleasant experiences because of negative perceptions about Islam. The presence of Muslim students at this university attracted the curiosity of extreme Christian missionaries who initially only asked him simple questions. However, their conversation then turned into an argument and finally became aggressive, so they made statements that offended Muslims. (Darynaufal, 2022). Propaganda like this has fostered rejection of Islam and Muslims in South Korean society.

Like the survey conducted by the Global Pew Research Center in 2018 and the Korean public policy institute in 2023 among Korean people regarding their views on Islam in the table below.

**Table 3**

**South Korean Community Survey on Islam**

2018 Pew Research Center Global Survey	2023 Korea Public Policy Institute Survey
52% of South Koreans have a negative view of Islam.	57% of South Koreans have a negative view of Islam.
37% of South Koreans have a positive view of Islam.	32% of South Koreans have a positive view of Islam.

*Source: Jang Do Jin, Korea Journal, 2023*

One of Korea's public policy institutes conducted a public opinion survey in 2023, finding that 57% of Koreans had a negative view of Islam and 32% had a positive view. This survey shows that there has been a consistent increase since 2018 in their views of Islam and a reduction in the positive number of Koreans' views of Islam, when the Pew Research Center Global Attitude Survey reported that 52% of South Koreans have a negative view of Islam, while 37% has a positive outlook.

The perception of Koreans built by Western media is that modernization is not only catching up with Western countries but also following Western lifestyles and habits. As a result, Muslim





women who wear the hijab are seen more negatively than Muslim men in Korea, Muslim women are more likely to be hated than Muslim men. Even though the hijab is an Islamic identity in society for women and Korean society also interprets the veil as a sign of resistance and associates it with terrorism.

## 2. Terrorism events in the world

Various factors, both internal and external, can influence the way a person views minority groups in their country. Internal factors can include demographic changes, such as the growing population of minority groups in society, as well as changes in social values and norms. External factors can include international events such as conflict or war and government policies that encourage tolerance or not and understanding of religion. Terrorism incidents are events that occur in various parts of the world. These events can occur in developed and developing countries. This event can be performed by individuals, groups, or organizations.

Terror itself comes from the Latin word *terrere*, which means to make someone tremble or fear. For several centuries, this term has referred to a person's state of mind. (Schmid, 2012). Terror is initially a mental condition in which a person experiences intense fear of a very frightening danger on an individual level, as well as the associated fear extending to a collective level. Terrorism is defined as actions, methods, or tactics motivated by psychological feelings to produce terror. (Schmid, 2012).

The United Nations (UN) Convention defines terrorism as any form of crime directed directly at the state, intending to create terror against certain individuals, groups of people, or society at large. Acts of terrorism have increased in recent years and have become a very worrying component of social movements in various parts of the world. (Sahni, 2011).

The long list of terror events linked to religious ideology has been extended by attacks that have occurred around the world, which have increasingly increased Islamophobia in the world. This is clearly visible in the occurrence of terrorist incidents linked to the Islamic religion which has led to an increase in hate crimes against Islam and Muslims which occur not only in one or two countries, such as in the European region, where in 2017 Austria recorded 309 cases of Islamophobia and this increased in 2017 and 2018 to 540 cases. (Golder, 2018). In France, there were 7 cases recorded and in Germany, there were around 678 attacks on Muslims and 40 cases of attacks on mosques were recorded. Meanwhile, between 2017-2018 in Italy there was an increase in hate speech towards Muslims on social media of approximately 5% and in Norway there were 120 official complaints to the police regarding the Islamic religion which were included in the complaints. (Golder, 2018).

Various reasons can encourage terrorism, such as terrorism, can be performed for political purposes, namely overthrowing the government or establishing a new country. Terrorism can be performed by using religion to spread certain ideologies or beliefs that are bad. Terrorism can spread ideologies, such as communism or anarchism. Terrorism can be conducted as revenge for certain actions or events. It can have a major impact on various aspects of human life, as terrorism can cause fear in society.

Terrorism can cause conflict between countries, can cause economic damage and cause social polarization and discrimination against certain groups. Terrorism incidents linked to religion are strongly opposed by several scientists and religious leaders. It is emphasized that terrorism has





nothing to do with religion. Religion is an innocent victim and, sometimes, even irrelevant. Fear of religion and followers of Islam is a phenomenon that often occurs.

South Korean society's negative view of Muslims in their country has increased over the last few years, starting with the influx of Yemeni refugees in 2018.(Kim, 2019). Immigration policies and government politics can influence public perceptions of minority groups, including Muslims. Acceptance or rejection of certain policies can strengthen or change public perceptions of the Muslim presence in South Korea.

Social processes in South Korea have changed because of globalization, causing people to be more open to diverse identities and cultures. While cross-cultural understanding is possible, these changes can also create doubt and discomfort in society. South Korea's experience in handling the global refugee crisis that began in 2018 is something that South Koreans are considering. Even before having a clear understanding of refugees, a large portion of South Korean society held a negative view of the newcomers inspired by Europe's experience with Islamic terrorism and the populist anti-refugee rhetoric found in other countries. The impact of this has become quite a big public concern and concern for Muslim refugees in Korea.

Starting from the conflict in Yemen, which resulted in Yemeni citizens fleeing their country to get protection, the Yemeni people sought a country they could visit and live in for a while and then entered Jeju Island, where a visa was not required. Jeju Island created a visa-free policy to improve the island's economy. (Anggraeni, 2023).

Millions of Yemenis have fled to neighboring countries, including South Korea, because of the long-running armed conflict in Yemen in 2018, which led to a humanitarian crisis. Around 500 Yemeni refugees arrived on Jeju Island, South Korea, in September 2018, after South Korea opened a refugee route to the country in May 2018. (Anggraeni, 2023). South Korea responded to Yemeni refugees in various ways. Some people see them with a negative perception and few welcome them well. These Yemeni refugees triggered a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment among Muslim residents in South Korea and became increasingly concerned among the South Korean people they came from Middle Eastern countries, which are mostly Muslim.

South Korea, which is known for its homogenous ethnicity, only grants refugee status to a small percentage of the large number of refugee applications. One factor that has led to the negative perception of South Korean society towards the influx of Yemeni and Muslim refugees is concerns related to security because of the conflict conditions in Yemen, some South Koreans are worried that Yemeni refugees could endanger the security of their country.

One of the main issues discussed in South Korea regarding Yemeni refugees is that they do not fit into Korean society because of their religion and culture. This happens even though they are recognized as legitimate refugees. Migrants, including refugees, bring their culture and bodies with them on the journey. Therefore, migration and settlement can create misunderstandings among residents and new arrivals because they have to adapt. (Kwon, 2019).

After the Yemeni refugee crisis in 2018, a public awareness survey regarding Muslim refugees and IDPs was conducted by several newspapers and institutions from 2018 to 2019. Based on the results of the study, Muslims were the target of more unfavorable attitudes toward Korean society., the core of his hostility is directed more towards Muslims. As in a survey conducted by Jungang Ilbo, which was conducted on 1 and 2 August 2018, it was revealed that the negative response of society





towards immigrants who were not Muslim was 44.7% and the negative response was quite high, around 66.6% in particular. towards Muslim refugees. (Yu, 2018). Likewise, among the five regions, namely the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and North America, Korean society's perception of immigrants from the Middle East is the most negative, reaching 70.9% according to a survey conducted by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies Institute on 4–24 December 2019. (Yu, 2018).

With the influx of over 500 Yemeni refugees to the South Korean island of Cheju-do in the first five months of 2018, anti-Islam rhetoric has not diminished or weakened, but has instead grown stronger. Muslims emerged as a new social movement, which became a problem for South Korean society. On the online petition board Ch'ong'wadae, the number of petition signatures demanding the abolition of refugees and the abolition of the visa waiver system reached 714,875 signatures within one month. This figure is the highest figure got in one month.

Approximately 6,278 posts expressing concern, hatred, and fear towards Yemeni refugees were uploaded between June and November 2018. (Board, 2018). These figures illustrate the magnitude of the negative reaction to the sudden influx of Yemeni refugees. The reason the South Korean people gave was that they reacted because they were Muslims. According to Sin Yewon and Ma Tongjun, a person interviewed by South Korean media revealed that the main reason behind Korean citizens' dissatisfaction was not their Yemeni refugee status, but that they came from the Muslim country of Yemen. (Sin & Ma Dong Hoon, 2019).

This backlash from Muslims would not appear in public discussion without a source deliberately promoting hatred or Islamophobia. Misinformation centered on Islam spreads in public discourse by displaying videos or photos that effectively spread negative images about Islam and Muslims among the public. Like the YouTube video content The old pathway which was broadcast during June and July 2018 which coincided with the Yemeni refugee issue, the video was shared with negative content titles such as the story of a country destroyed because it accepted Muslim refugees and the end of a Christian country because it accommodated Islamic refugees (Sang, 2018).

In 2019, there was violence against Muslims in New Zealand, namely the brutal shooting of Muslims who were praying by a young Australian named Brenton Tarrant at two different mosques. The victims injured in the shooting were Indonesian residents. Before the shooting, Tarrant had posted a manifesto on the internet containing very negative personal views towards immigrants and Muslims, as well as the reasons the attack was performed. Tarrant appeared to use the manifesto as an excuse to attack Muslims in Christchurch. (Detik.com, 2019). Like the terrorism incident above, it is something that is closely associated with Islam by South Korean people who do not want to determine about Islam. The impact of terrorism on human rights is that it eliminates the victim's right to life and instills fear in society. Terrorism creates an unsafe environment and makes people feel threatened. Terrorism also makes people afraid and there is no freedom of expression.

## **Conclusion**

In recent years, South Korea has become the focus of the public and several parties because of discrimination against Muslims, which occurs in various forms, both directly and indirectly, such as hate speech and physical violence. South Korea's identity as a democratic country that upholds human rights has been questioned by various parties. Islamic religious life in South Korea reflects





the experiences and practices of the Muslim community in a country where Islam is a minority religion. Halal practices are observed in terms of dietary restrictions and it is quite difficult to find or provide halal food options. The Muslim community in South Korea is diverse, comprising individuals from many cultural backgrounds.

Human Rights are universal rights guaranteed by international laws and conventions. When other people's rights are limited because of basic differences, such as racial or ethnic discrimination, it is called human rights discrimination. Human Rights states everyone may be free from discriminatory treatment. The human rights got by Muslim citizens in South Korea show that the government there does not provide strict rules to regulate the people in their country to comply with human rights rules, namely giving equal rights to every existing religion. The mutual trust of local people who show more trust in news from the mass media that is not true is quite an important problem. South Korean society has a negative view of Islam because it is considered a religion that is synonymous with violence and terrorism. This is showed by Islamophobia, the standard used by South Korean society to judge Islam.

Based on the results of research and data analysis, it can be concluded that the occurrence of acts of human rights discrimination against Muslims in South Korea in 2018-2023 is because of the unchanged views towards Muslims which are influenced by various things and are further strengthened by the influx of Yemeni refugees into South Korea, in 2018. Here, the occurrence of human rights discrimination is characterized by the ignorance of the South Korean people regarding Islam which is increasingly strengthened by anti-Islam propaganda originating from various mass media both domestically and abroad as well as the occurrence of religion-based terrorism in around the world causing fear among local South Korean citizens, giving rise to misperceptions of Muslims living in their country. Shows that in recent years, South Korean society has been too focused on the mass media, which reports inaccurately about Muslims and the negative perceptions that have emerged, resulting in acts of discrimination against Muslims in South Korea.

Massa media has an important role in shaping public perception. South Korean mass media often portray Islam as a negative thing. This causes South Korean people to have a wrong understanding of Islam. Anti-Islam propaganda can prevent South Korean people from understanding human rights including the right to religion, and lead to discrimination against minority groups, one of which is Muslims, such as restrictions on freedom of religion and worship, which the South Korean government and society must stop. The relationship between human rights (HAM) and anti-Islam propaganda is very complex and nuanced. In terms of freedom of expression, human rights protect the right to live free from discrimination and hatred, meaning that anti-Islam propaganda can violate Muslims' human rights.

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