



# FIRST REPORT OF **ISLAMOPHOBIA** IN **BRAZIL**

**gracias**  
GRUPO DE ANTROPOLOGIA EM  
CONTEXTOS ISLÂMICOS E  
ÁRABES

**USP**

PROGRAMA DE  
PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO  
EM PSICOLOGIA  
FFCLRP  
UNESP

  
**CAPES**

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# I REPORT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BRAZIL

JUNE | 2022

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## **I Report on Islamophobia in Brazil**

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*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

Scientific research is not only made up of readings, records, writings and presentations of data, but also of a network that opens up, many times, through others who facilitate our path. Therefore, it is important to record our thanks to all the Muslim women and all the Muslim men who answered our quantitative survey, but also who have been talking to Professor Francirosy in her Productivity Survey. Without the participation of the 653 people who answered the questionnaire, we would not be able to look at this issue more comprehensively and account for its particularities. We would like to thank all those who have answered our questionnaire.

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## Introduction

GRACIAS (Group of Anthropology in Islamic Contexts), coordinated by associate professor at USP Dr. Francirosy Campos Barbosa, professor at the Department of Psychology in Ribeirão Preto, is the protagonist of the first Report on Islamophobia in Brazil. The purpose of the various studies included in this report was not simply to verify the existence of Islamophobia, which is defined as “fear of Islam” and which entails a feeling of hatred and/or repudiation towards Muslims and the Islamic religion (Barbosa; Souza 2022), but also bring forward reflections that underlie this feeling of repudiation; themes that are often included in a perspective that simply projects “religious intolerance”, but that the quantitative research presented here precisely demonstrates other points that intersect: issues of class, race and gender, as well as propositions that involve conservative and traditionalist right-wing political positions, leading to the understanding of Islamophobia as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. In this sense, we agree with Aziz (2022, p. 4-5) on the process of racialization of Muslims, which occurs globally. For the author, there are four factors that collaborate with this process: (1) white/protestant supremacy; 2) xenophobia; 3) European and American Orientalism; 4) and American imperialism in countries with a majority Islamic population.

It is undeniable that the post-9/11 period has contributed substantially to the way the world looks at Muslims, as if they were enemies of the West and incapable of inserting themselves in societies other than those of Islamic expression. Such an inability to assimilate would lead to the process identified as Islamization, through which Muslim men and women would seek to change the societies in which they find themselves, whether through a hidden attack on institutions or by acting as a fifth column — in a movement that the literature (Green, 2015; Dabashi, 2011; Traverso, 2016) identifies as a transition from the communist “red scare” to the Islamic “green peril”. This perspective sees Muslims and Islam as a monolithic block, as if they were all dangerous and there was no possibility of assimilation or integration. The result of such an understanding becomes the foundation of actions that range from academic and media understanding to international politics: making Islamic countries and Muslim people and their differences invisible, promoting cultural epistemicide and

cultivating religious obscurantism. This is another reason why this research is important, as it builds an analysis that goes against the hegemonic thinking that always places the Muslim as the other and as a terrorist, the woman as oppressed and other such conceptions that need to be urgently questioned within and outside academia.

In an entry written for the *Dicionário das Relações Étnico-Raciais* (Dictionary of Ethnic-Racial Relations), Barbosa & Souza (2022) draw attention to the fact that, despite the negative post-9/11 image of Islam, there was a considerable growth of followers of the religion, and the reversions occurred in proportions unimaginable considering the negative promotion that goes against the assumptions of the Islamic religion. Barbosa (2017), in her doctoral thesis, reflects that Brazilian Islamic communities had to open up to build a greater dialogue with society, thus attracting more people to Islam. The ethnic, Arab character of the religion continues to be the tone of representations about Muslims; however, more people became aware of the complexity of Muslim populations — exemplified by the inclusion of the Malê Revolt<sup>2</sup> in textbooks (Costa, 2016) — and, therefore, Islamophobia should not be prevented from being conceived as a reaction movement to Islamic existence(s), having economic, historical, sociological, psychological, cultural, legal and political dimensions.

Regarding the conceptualization of the term Islamophobia, Barbosa & Souza (2022) observe that it is not something academically simple, since this conceptualization will depend on the area of knowledge that investigates the phenomenon. For example, Barbosa, being an anthropologist, considers as Islamophobia what *the interlocutor* attributes as Islamophobia: a joke about a *suicide bomber*, about being a *terrorist* for carrying a backpack with unknown content — these serve as examples of Islamophobic phrases. Indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed towards Islam or Muslims are elements that, if indicated as such by the subjects who suffer these attacks, are indeed Islamophobia, and this is how the researcher has been listening to her interlocutors.

The questionnaire applied to the interlocutors of this quantitative research welcomed comments about what they suffered. Reports were obtained such as:

At work (medical field) there's always someone random making Islamophobic comments like "why do your people like to kill people?", "why does your religion encourage terrorism?", "your wife didn't convert because it's hard for women, right?", "your God

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<sup>2</sup> To learn more about the Malê Revolt, check out the documentary produced by Professor Francirosy C. Barbosa: Allah, Oxalá na trilha Malê (Allah, Inshallah: on the Malê trail, 2015/LISA/USP).



doesn't like women, right?", "I don't know anything about your religion, but I am a very critical person and I would never accept the way your religion treats women".

These comments and others that will be highlighted throughout this report demonstrate sometimes a lack of knowledge about the Islamic religion, sometimes a knowledge that is biased or consistent with the processes of racialization of Muslims mentioned above, in Aziz (2022), and mainly the lack of knowledge and distortion of how the religion treats women, projecting stereotypes about Islamic ways of being and delegitimizing the readings and propositions of Muslim men and women about their own faith that do not fit these projections. It is interesting to note that, when it comes to gender violence, interpretations are always linked to religion and not necessarily to structural machismo, to the patriarchy that exists in all societies, regardless of religion, culture, etc., leading to an immediate identification between Islam and misogyny, and that concerns more the aspects mentioned above than the faith itself, as if machismo and misogyny were something specifically Islamic. Islam is not practiced outside of a historical, social and economic context that promotes machismo and misogyny — and this is reflected in the experiences of Muslims in different ways.

Currently, the GRACIAS researcher is carrying out, as a CAPES productivity fellow, research on *Islamophobic Narratives in Brazil*. This research project seeks to identify and understand the construction of narratives about Islamophobia and the various ways of responding to them by the Muslim community. This project asks whether Muslim women are the main target of discrimination, especially if they use the Islamic scarf (hijab, or any other garment that identifies them as Muslim), or if other aspects of this rejection of Islam and Muslims are configured such as the use of a beard by men, surnames of Arab origin, among others — such social agents invariably associated with stereotypes of terrorists, radicals, fundamentalists. These questions are also evidenced in the quantitative research and are substantially added to the comment highlighted above. From the point of view of many non-Muslim people, the religion is oppressive of women, and the clothing they wear is seen as an example of it. *Hijabophobia* is present in the discourse of people who link the use of the hijab to violence and oppression of Muslim women. Barbosa (2022) considers that hijabophobia expresses the fear, concern and horror that people have in relation to Muslim women who wear hijab, to the point of committing verbal and physical violence in public and private spaces.

Another member of GRACIAS who has been carrying out research for his doctorate in Social Sciences at the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of UNESP in

Araraquara is Felipe Freitas de Souza. In his latest research, the author identifies that Islamophobia is a global phenomenon linked mainly to the rise of the extreme right in the world and that it manifests itself contemporaneously in Brazil along with the phenomenon of Bolsonarism (Souza, 2021; 2022). In this sense, what happens in Brazil is similar to what happens in the United States, England, France, Hungary: Islamophobia is part of the repertoire of the right nowadays in a similar way to what anti-Semitism was in the past. As a global phenomenon, Islamophobia will then have as its standard the use of Muslim men and women and Islam as rhetorical elements for the defense of authoritarian, conservative and traditionalist agendas — which opposes the proposals of a multicultural and plural society. For the researcher, Islamophobia is not limited to its discursive dimension, but is a structuring dimension of the experiences of non-Muslims and Muslim people, its discursive manifestations being a verbalized aspect that does not exhaust the violence that Muslims experience around the world.

In a recent study, Souza (2022) states that Islamophobia may not be the main element of extreme right-wing ideologies in Brazil, but that the acceptance of violence against Muslims constellates in this ideology, influencing and characterizing it. In turn, the racialization of Arabs and non-Arabs due to the profession of Islam, as Karam (2009) and Caixeta and Castro (2020) point out about Brazil and Aziz (2022) explains in the case of the United States, is also reflected in the present report. Considering the Arab diacritics and the answers collected in this report, even reverted Muslims experience instances of physical and symbolic violence due to their appearances, in person and online, referring to Arab characteristics that are associated with Islam — although Arab and Muslim absolutely do not refer to the same thing.

In addition to revealing the reality at hand, the importance of a report such as this lies in integrating a global effort to understand the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Thus, we emphasize that this report owes much in its intentionality and origins to previous reports and from other contexts. The first one, *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all*, produced by The Runnymede Trust, is from 1997 (therefore pre-9/11), and already identified issues that expanded throughout time, mainly the closed readings about Islam and Muslims, such as that Muslims form a monolithic block, that they are enemies of the West, among other prejudiced and reductionist apprehensions. This report can be said to have inaugurated a series of reports, each with its own methodology and intentionality, which followed from different institutions: CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations), Tell MAMA (Measuring

Anti-Muslim Attacks), CCIF (*Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France*, "Collective Against Islamophobia in France"), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Hope Not Hate, European Network Against Racism, *Musulmanes contra la Islamofobia* ("Muslims Against Islamophobia"). The report by The Runnymede Trust is followed by reports from all these institutions that identify how Islamophobia has been normalized, disseminated and even encouraged by different social agents of greater or lesser expression, whether members of the State or not. Although the corpus on the relationship between Islamophobia and mental health is still incipient in the scientific field in Brazil, research carried out in the US context suggests that Islamophobia is negatively associated with mental health and access to health services, that is, experiencing an episode of discrimination and/or violence causes an increase in the depression/anxiety rates of Muslims and hinders their access to formal care equipment (Martin, 2015; Inhorn & Serour, 2011). In addition, Muslim women who wear the hijab report that their clothing tends to influence the quality of care they receive: feeling ignored, excluded and disrespected by the health professional are the most frequent complaints (Samari, Alcalá & Sharif, 2018). The work of Awan and Zempi (2015), interviewing Muslim men and women victims of aggression in physical and virtual space, also points out the psychological damage that victims of these aggressions experience, which leaves open the question of how Islamophobia influences the practice of Islam by individuals and communities.

It is important to highlight that, historically, Muslims have been neglected in academic production in the field of health, in particular in the Brazilian psychological literature (Molina & Pasqualin, 2022; Paiva & Barbosa, 2021). Although religion is a social determinant of health, it is certainly among the ones rendered the most invisible (Padela & Zaidi, 2018; Idler, 2014): even among the studies already carried out, the data found in research with Muslims demand a critical look, since they are occasionally used with the purpose of reinforcing stereotypes and pathologizing both the behaviors of religious individuals and Islamic beliefs themselves (Amer & Bagasra, 2013). That said, we immediately highlight the ethical warning directed at researchers and health professionals so that they do not reproduce the circulating Islamophobic discourses in their practices with Muslims.

This series of data leads to the conclusion that Islamophobia is also a public health issue (Ali & Awaad, 2019; Samari, Alcalá & Sharif, 2018) and, considering that Islam is the second largest religion in the world and the fastest growing one, this tends to be an issue that demands global reflection. According to Samari (2016), the

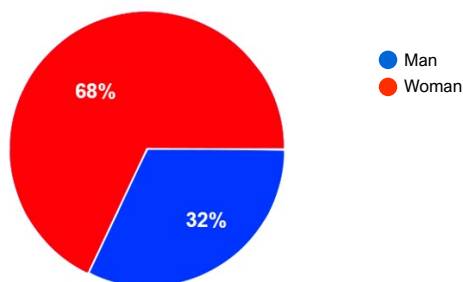
Islamophobia-health relationship is multidimensional: it acts on an individual level, as Muslim men and women feel its effects individually; at an interpersonal level, since discrimination interferes with their personal relationships and their socialization processes; and at a structural level, leading Muslims to be neglected by public and institutional policies. Haque (2004) points out that the prejudice and discrimination that Muslims suffer is directly related to the psychosocial stressors prevalent in the different contexts where they are inserted.

This report aims to contribute with information about the situation of people of the Islamic faith in Brazil and the symbolic and physical aggressions they experience. There are different theoretical perspectives that can be employed to look at these data: Anthropology, Sociology, Law and Social Psychology. This report does not exhaust the interpretations, and we hope that the data contained here can help other research and interventions carried out by the Muslim community to reduce or eradicate this anti-Islam feeling, as well as the dissemination in the media for a better interpretation of the phenomenon.

Based on the aforementioned reports and research coordinated by Barbosa within the scope of GRACIAS, we decided to join efforts to build quantitative research that would demonstrate some hypotheses that we had, mainly in relation to reverted Muslim women as victims of continuous attacks, as well as the intertwining of signs of Muslimness expressed by clothes and accessories with an Arab-Islamic connotation. Hypotheses about online Islamophobia, or cyber-Islamophobia, are also confirmed, demonstrating that the virtual space is one of the new fronts for action by Islamophobes. For this, we built a questionnaire using Google forms with questions that aimed to capture the apprehensions of the Brazilian Muslim community, published on social networks and various groups of the Islamic community. In all, 653 (six hundred and fifty-three) people answered the questionnaire between February/2021 and the end of Ramadan 2021 (May/21). We aimed to obtain responses from around 1000 Muslims; however, we were unable to achieve this goal, which also demonstrates the difficulty of accessing people, even virtually. The help for promoting the research was received mainly by individual initiatives.

## You are a:

653 answers



However, the number reached still serves to demonstrate the hypotheses we raised and reinforces that, in general, those who suffer more violence are those who are more willing to participate in research on the subject. In this case, it's the reverted women. Of these women, 71% wear the hijab (Islamic headscarf) compared to born Muslims (59%), and they report experiencing more prejudice against the religion than born Muslims. It is noteworthy that most participants, both men and women, have higher education, which leads to the hypothesis that the research reached a more "intellectualized" population or that we can consider that most Muslims have a higher educational level than the Brazilian average. Comments from born Muslim men show some ideas shared by a minority of participants expressing that "the behavior of the Muslim will dictate how he will be treated", and some deny the idea that Islamophobia exists, which shows the resistance of part of the community to recognize that this practice exists in Brazil.

While some men report this "non-existence" of Islamophobia, women report physical aggression, sexualization, loss of job opportunities and even refusal to wear the hijab due to the development of psychological disorders arising from the embarrassment faced by prejudice against the religion. In the case of reverted Muslim women, there are even reports of embarrassment caused by men with whom they have had intimate contact and who embarrassed them after their reversion. Regarding the feelings shown, both men and women who have suffered from Islamophobia report greater feelings of anger, discouragement, inferiority and sadness. However, for the most part, they do not seek mental health services to deal with such feelings. In terms of reports of psychic suffering, both from men and women, we identified from the responses the trend that Awan and Zempi (2015) had already identified in the United Kingdom. This may raise the question on why there is no extensive search

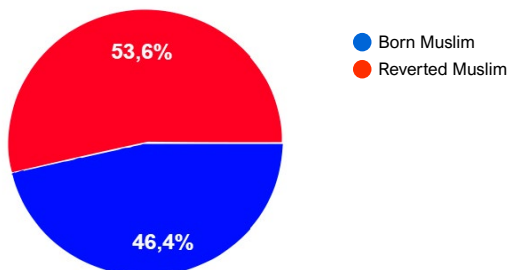
for these services or for legal proceedings against oppressors. Would the complaints of Muslim people in Brazil be legitimized by our health and justice institutions? Most do not file a police report and do not seek legal means to defend themselves against the violence suffered. In this sense, violence against this minority does not appear institutionally, but takes shape in the reports that we unprecedentedly collected.

The report that follows presents two sub-divided parts: Men and Women — further distinguishing between born Muslim men and reverted Muslim men; born Muslim women and reverted Muslim women. It is important to point out that the Brazilian community, having been made up mostly of Arabs, includes this population in the “born” category. However, we know that in Brazil there are other groups such as Africans, Turks, Persians, Pakistanis who also express Islam in their family environment.

# 1. Male respondents

**You are a:**

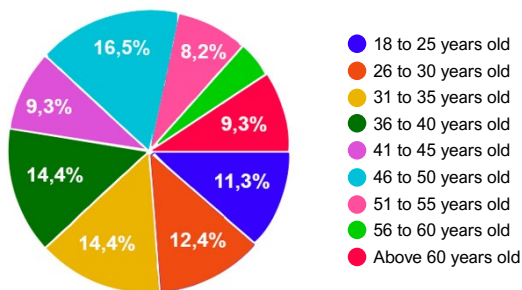
**653 answers**



## 1.1 Born Muslims

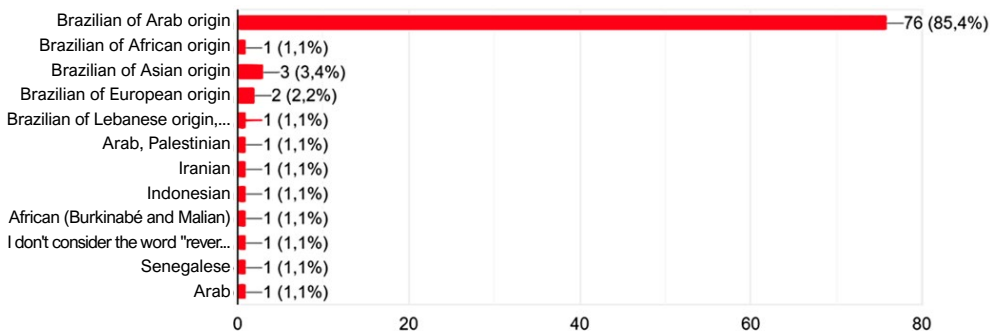
**Age:**

**97 answers**



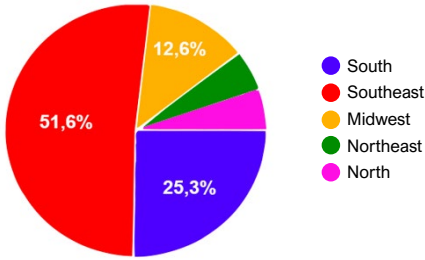
**Ancestry: (More than one option can be selected)**

**89 answers**



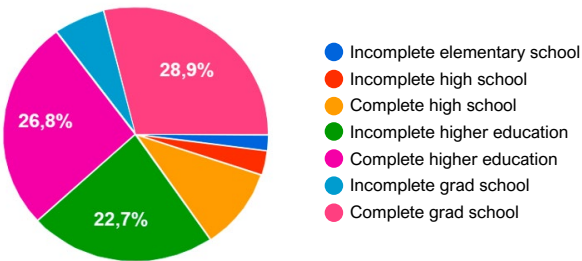
### In which region of Brazil do you reside?

95 answers



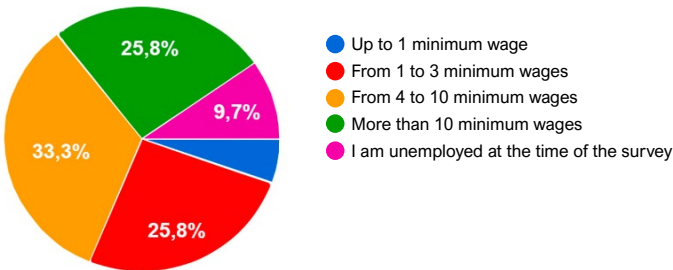
### What is your educational level?

97 answers



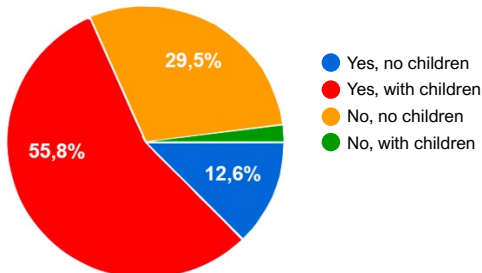
### Salary range:

93 answers



### Are you married? Do you have children?

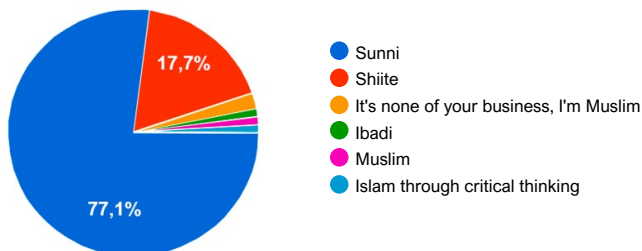
95 answers





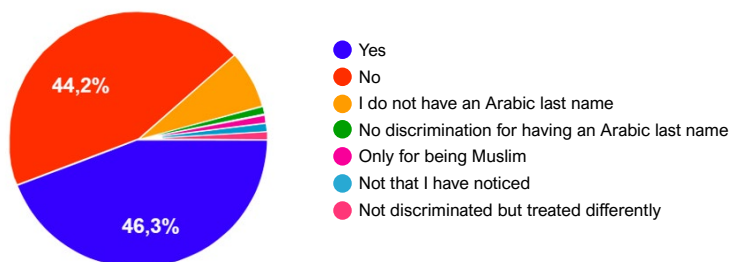
### What tradition do you follow?

96 answers



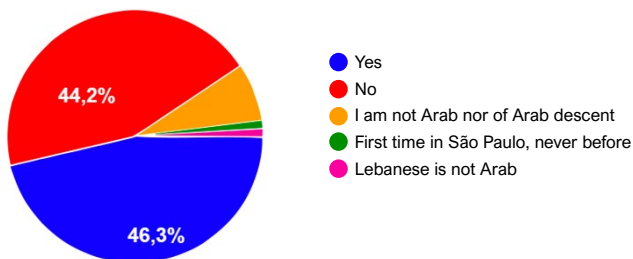
### If you are Arab or of Arab descent, have you ever been discriminated against for having an Arabic last name?

95 answers



### If you are Arab or of Arab descent, have you ever suffered ethnic-racial discrimination for being Arab?

95 answers



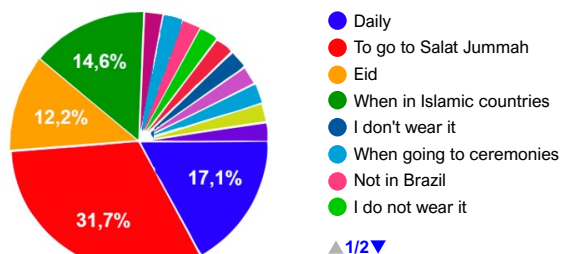
### Do you wear any Islamic clothing (djellaba, kaftan, jalabiya, keffiyeh, taqiyah etc.)?

96 answers



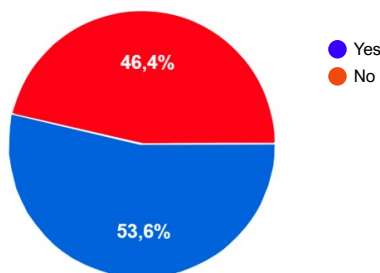
### If so, how often do you wear it? (more than one option can be selected)

41 answers



### Have you ever experienced any embarrassment due to the religion?

97 answers



Regarding men born in the religion, we can highlight that respondents range from 18 to over 60 years old, with a small emphasis on men between 46 and 50 years old, most of them of Arab descent, who live in the Southeast region (around 51%), with higher education or a graduate degree. The salary range highlights that 33% receive between 4 and 10 minimum wages, and 25% above 10 minimum wages. Half of the respondents are married with children, and most of them follow the Sunni tradition. Regarding discrimination in relation to Arab surnames, there was a tie: half reported having been discriminated against and half reported having not; however, when it comes to ethnic-racial discrimination, this number grows. The vast majority do not wear the traditional clothes of their countries, which are generally linked to Islam, in their daily lives. These “Islamic”<sup>2</sup> garments are diacritical marks that demarcate Muslimness. Some men have reported that they wear these “Arabic” clothes with a religious meaning when attending Friday prayer (Salat Jummah)

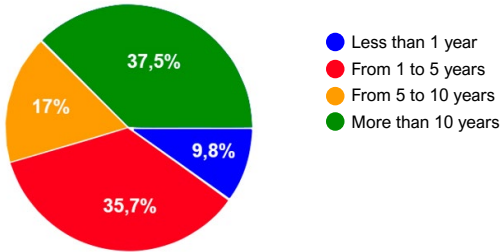
<sup>2</sup> Here, what we are calling Islamic clothing are actually Arabic, African, etc. traditional clothing that symbolize, in some way, the people wearing them as Muslims. But male Islamic clothing is one that covers the chest and intimate area. To enter the mosque, for example, a man must be wearing a shirt/t-shirt and long pants.

or Islamic events set up as religious activities. More than half of men born into the religion have experienced embarrassment because of their religious affiliation.

## 1.2 Muslims reverted to Islam

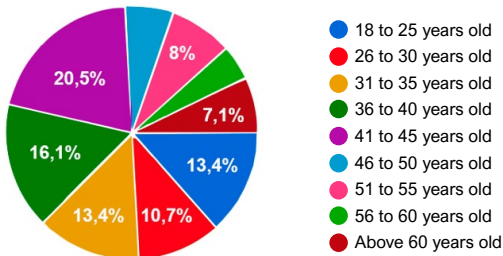
### How long ago were you reverted?

112 answers



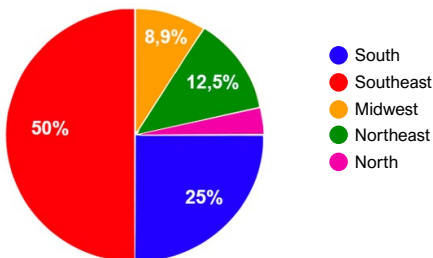
### Age:

112 answers



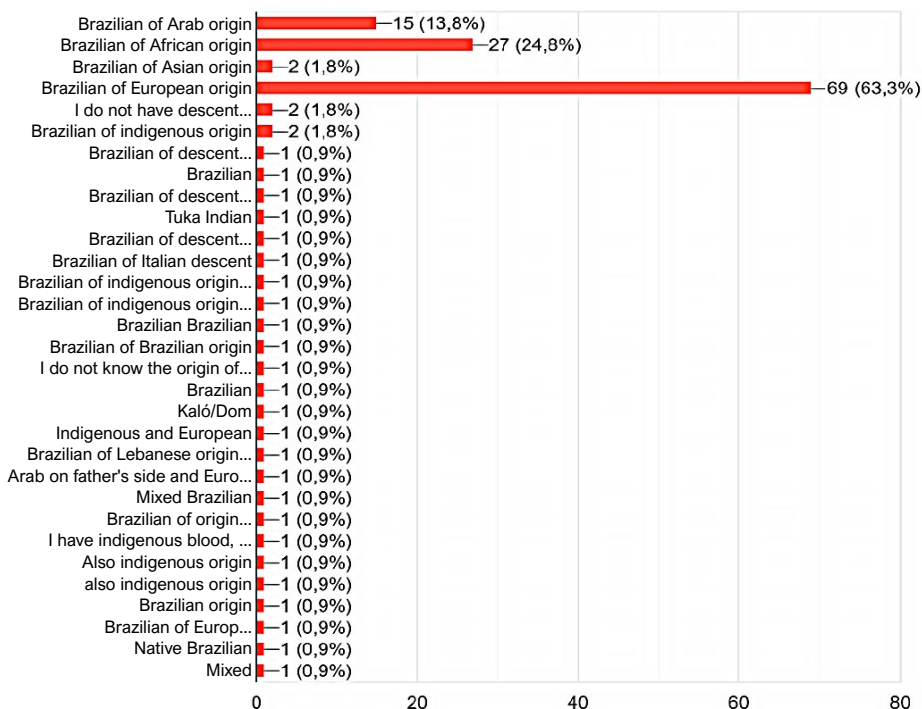
### In which region of Brazil do you reside?

112 answers



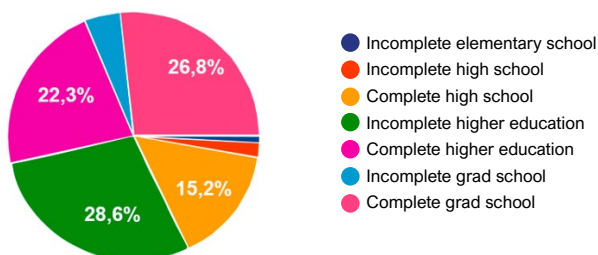
## Ancestry: (More than one option can be selected)

109 answers



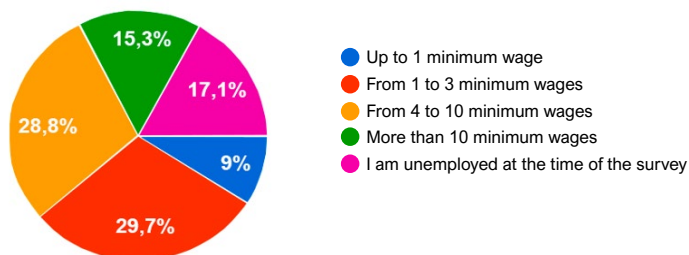
## What is your educational level?

112 answers



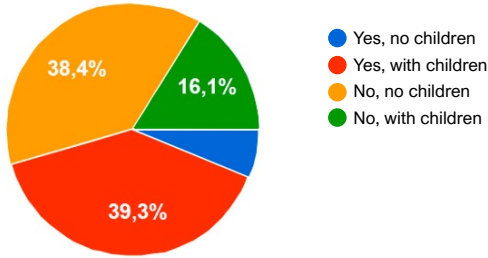
## Salary range:

111 answers



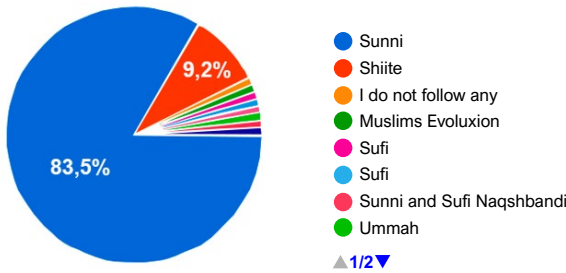
**Are you married? Do you have children?**

112 answers



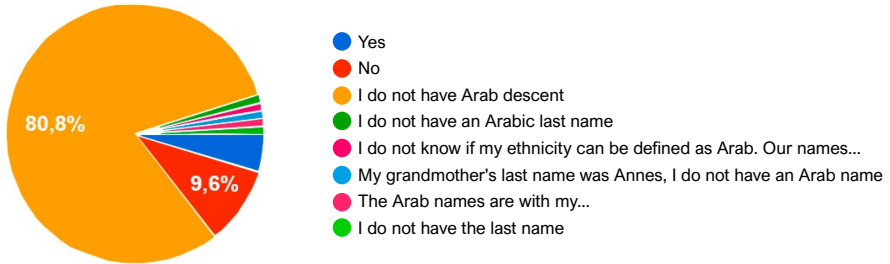
**What tradition do you follow?**

109 answers



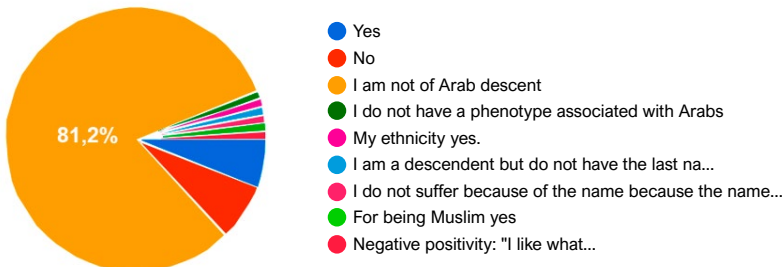
**If you are of Arab descent, have you ever been discriminated against or having an Arabic last name?**

104 answers



**If you are of Arab descent, have you ever suffered ethnic-racial discrimination for being Arab?**

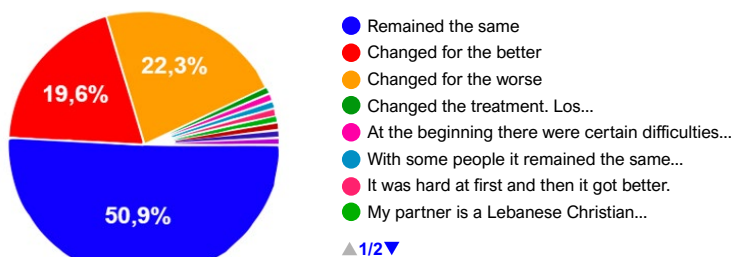
101 answers



Subtle statements by prejudiced people can have a very strong impact on the lives of Muslims, given that, even with a positive tone, implicit prejudice can be in any statement by anyone, whether within the family nucleus or in a social and public environment. This kind of subtlety can configure a form of microaggression, such as the endorsement of religious stereotypes, the attribution of exoticism, the understanding that religious belonging is a form of pathology, assuming that Muslim identity is a deviation from the norm or that the very non-Muslim religious identity should be the norm and even the denial of prejudice (Souza, 2018). Consequently, based on this brief explanation, a statement with a positive tone is noted, but with an implicit subtlety referring to a stigma socially constructed by episodes of microaggression throughout their history.

<p>Comment heard by a Muslim that refers to neutrality, but has an implicit negative subtlety »</p>	<p>Implicit prejudice</p>
	<p><i>I like what you suicide bombers do; I support it.</i></p>

**After your reversion, do you feel that your relationship with your close relatives (parents, children and partner):**  
**112 answers**

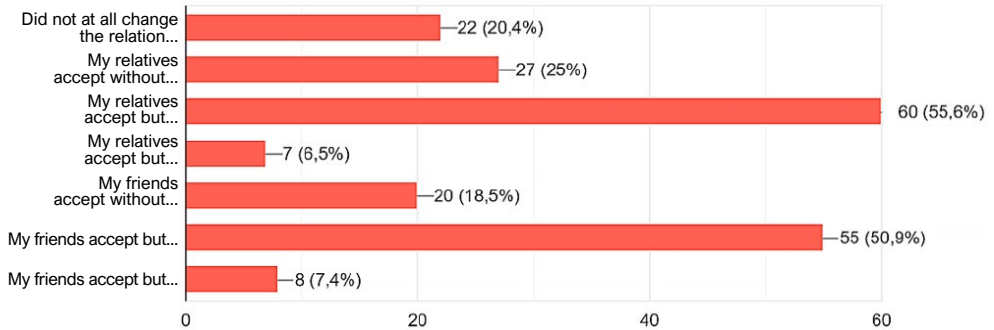


The relationship with the family, especially when a conflicting one, appears in the comments of some reverted Muslims; however, according to the chart, it can be seen that most respondents did not experience problems and had a smooth change, without conflicts with family members. In turn, others claim that the relationship became difficult, but gradually changed, which demonstrates that becoming a Muslim is not a process without contradictions or conflicts.

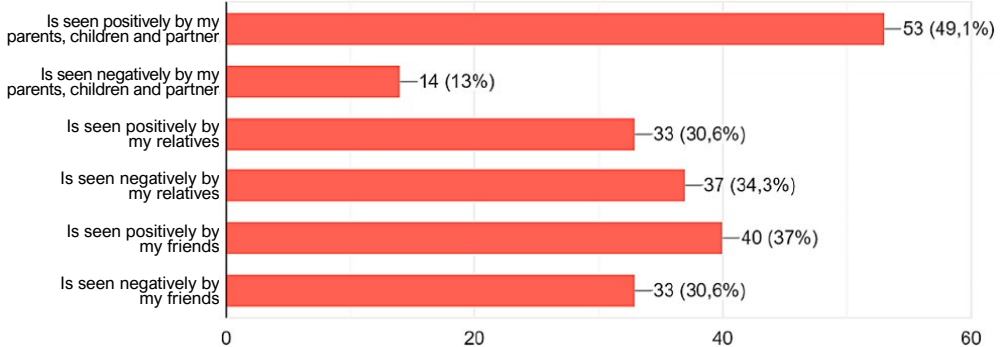
Comment referring to the difficulty of reverting »

*My partner is a Lebanese Christian and did not accept my reversion. We're separated.*

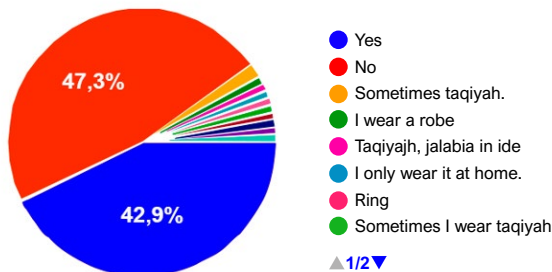
**Still regarding social relationships, but more distant relatives and friends, do you feel that your reversion: (More than one answer can be selected)**  
**108 answers**



**Still regarding social relationships, do you feel that your reversion: (More than one answer can be selected)**  
**108 answers**



**Do you wear any Islamic clothing (djellaba, kaftan, jalabiya, keffiyeh, taqiyah etc.)?**  
**112 answers**



## DAILY LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS REGARDING ISLAMIC CLOTHING

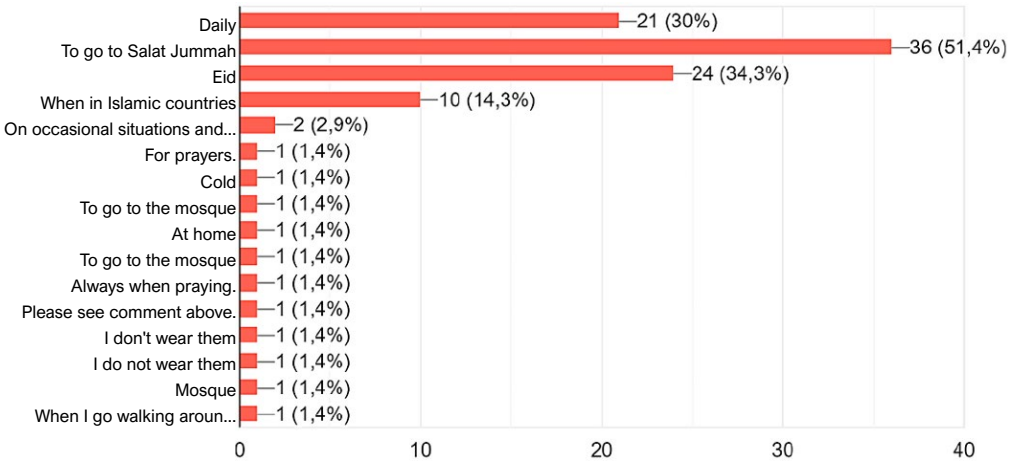
**Situation 1:** I wear taqiyah, but not routinely.

**Situation 2:** Not necessarily these garments, but in general Afro-Asian clothing (priest collar, long sleeves).

**Situation 3:** Sometimes.

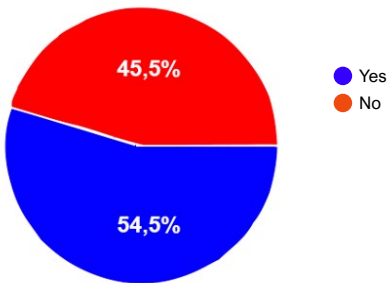
### If so, how often do you wear them? (more than one option can be selected)

70 answers



### Have you ever experienced some type of embarrassment due to the religion?

112 answers



Regarding reverted men, we can highlight that 37.5% have been reverted for more than 10 years, and 35.7% reverted between 1 and 5 years ago, demonstrating that the reversion flow continues. The age of respondents ranges from 18 to over 60 years of age, with emphasis on men between 36 to 40 and 41 to 45. The most common ancestries are European, African and Arab, in that order. The southeast region represents half of this population, which reveals a significant Muslim presence in this

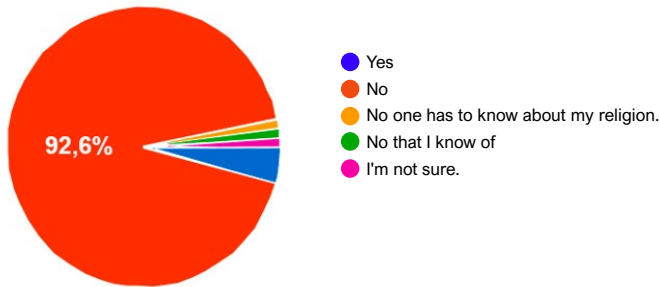


region of the country. The educational level, differently from the born Muslim group, has high representation of incomplete higher education (28.6%) and graduate studies (26.8%). The salary is comparatively lower than that of born Muslims, with 29.7% of the group earning from 1 to 3 minimum wages, 28.8% from 4 to 10 minimum wages, and 17% being unemployed (it should be noted that the survey was applied during the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic). It is noteworthy that 39% are married and have children, and 38% are not married and have no children, a similar proportion to those in the born Muslim group. Of the respondents, the majority are Sunnis, a higher proportion than in the born Muslim group. When it comes to the relationship with the family after the reversion, 22.3% report that the reversion caused difficulties, while 30% report difficulty in the relationship with friends. Regarding traditional clothing, 42.9% wear it when they go to Friday prayers, and 54.5% indicate experiences of embarrassment due to experiencing the religion publicly.

### 1.3 Reverted Muslim men who did NOT suffer Islamophobia

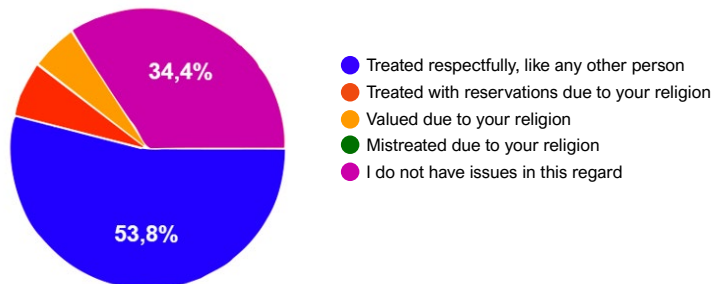
**Have you ever lost your job or an opportunity/promotion due to your religion?**

95 answers



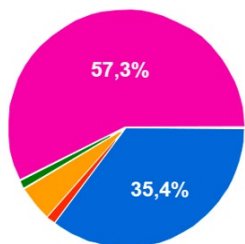
**In your relationship with coworkers, due to being Muslim, you are:**

93 answers



### In your school or university environment:

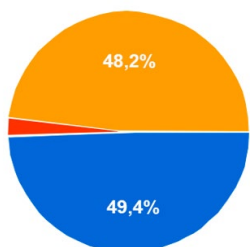
82 answers



- I feel respected by teachers and classmates
- I feel discriminated against by teachers but welcomed by classmates
- I feel respected by teachers but discriminated against by class...
- I feel discriminated against by teachers and classmates
- I do not have issues in this regard

### Still regarding your school or university environment:

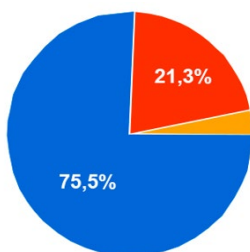
83 answers



- Classmates want to know more about my religion
- Classmates distance themselves from me due to my religion
- I do not have issues in this regard

### In your opinion, people you interact with but that are from other religions:

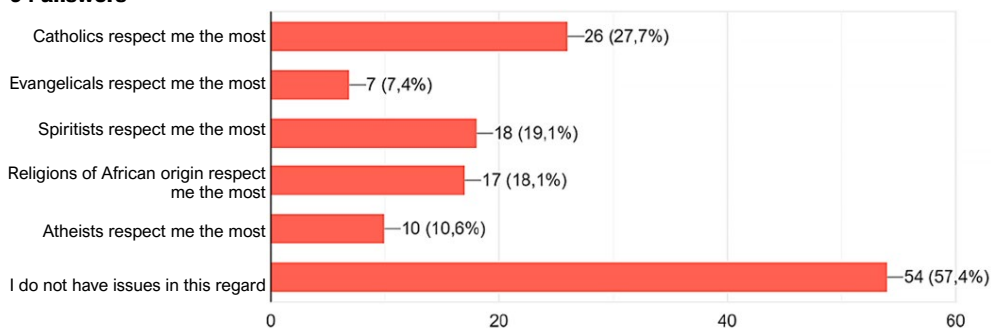
94 answers



- Accept me without problems
- Accept me with reservations
- Criticize me and try to convince me to abandon my beliefs
- Criticize me and distance themselves from me
- Do not get closer to me due to my religion

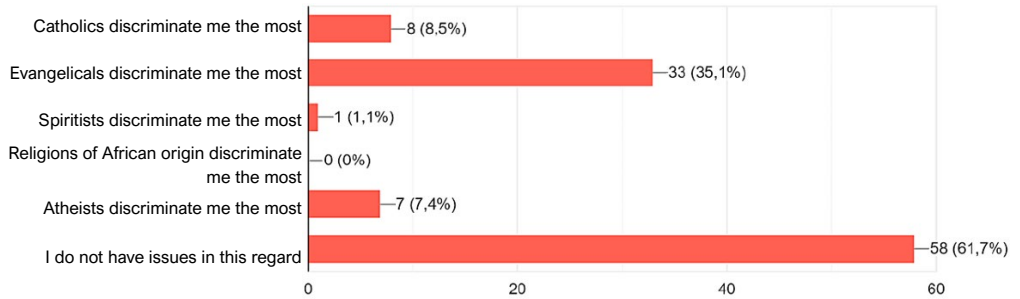
### People of which religion different than yours respect you the most? (More than one option can be selected)

94 answers



**People of which religion different than yours discriminate you the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

94 answers



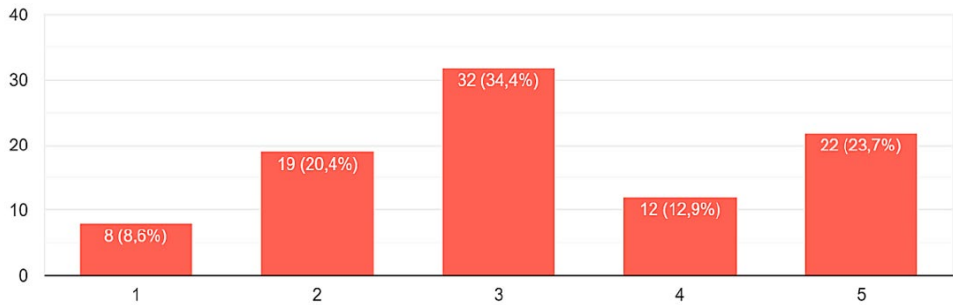
For the following questions:

1 - Strongly agree

5 - Strongly disagree

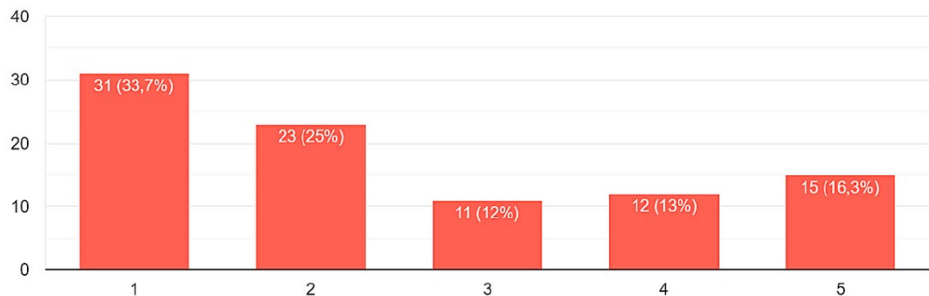
**Most Brazilians are afraid of Muslims.**

93 answers



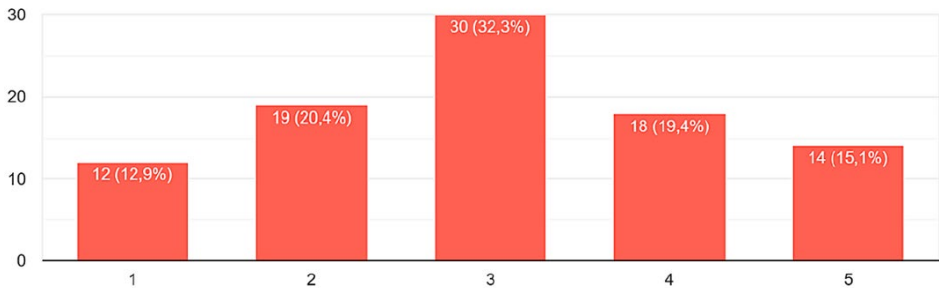
**Islam is represented negatively in Brazilian media.**

92 answers



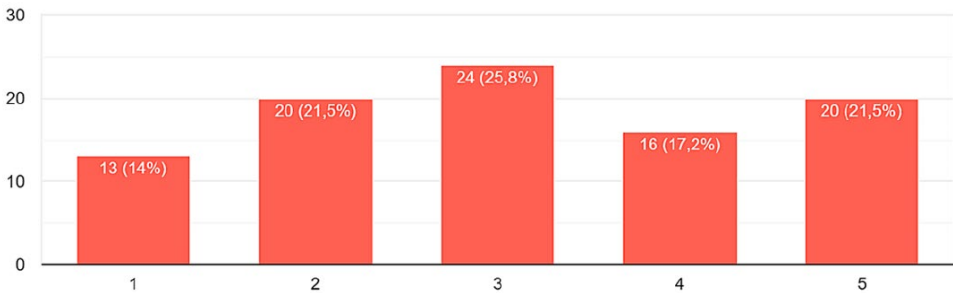
## Generally speaking, few Brazilians are afraid of Islam and Muslims.

93 answers



## Most Brazilians perceive Islam as a threat to their culture.

93 answers



Regarding men born and reverted to Islam who say they do not suffer from Islamophobia, we can highlight that the vast majority did not lose jobs or opportunities because of religion, and that more than half have a respectful relationship with their colleagues. At the university/school, they do not have this type of problem, and some feel respected, in addition to pointing out that many people in these environments want to know about the religion. Such statement of not having experienced Islamophobia should be understood as “not having experienced situations of violence directed against them”; this is said, because if we read Islamophobia not as a “hate speech”, but as a structure that conditions social relations, any Muslim experiences or has experienced Islamophobia as long as it is not eliminated — something similar to what Black people experience with structural racism.

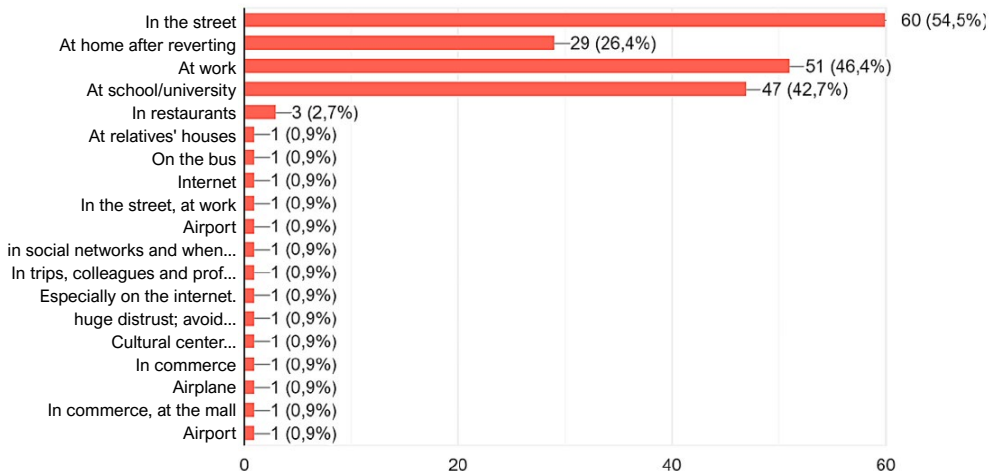
When asked which is the religious denomination of acquaintances who most accept them, Catholics stand out with 27.7%, while **the lowest number is Evangelicals**, with 7.4%. When asked which religious group discriminates them the most, **Evangelicals stand out with 35.1%**, while the majority (+ 60%) reports not having this problem.

Considering the numbers from 1 to 5 — the majority highlighted 3 when it comes to a fear of Muslims, to a total of 34.4%; **when it comes to how Islam is represented in the media, most selected 1 and 2**, which correspond to 33.7% and 25% of participants respectively. Regarding whether Brazilians fear Islam and Muslims, the most indicated number was 3 (32.3%), as well as in relation to the threat to culture.

## 1.4 Born Muslim men who suffered Islamophobia

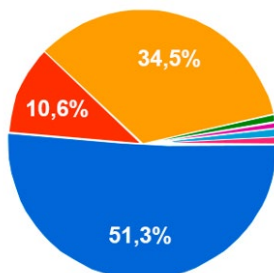
**If so, in which environments did this situation of embarrassment happen? (More than one option can be selected)**

110 answers



**In your perception, the embarrassment/violence suffered is related to:**

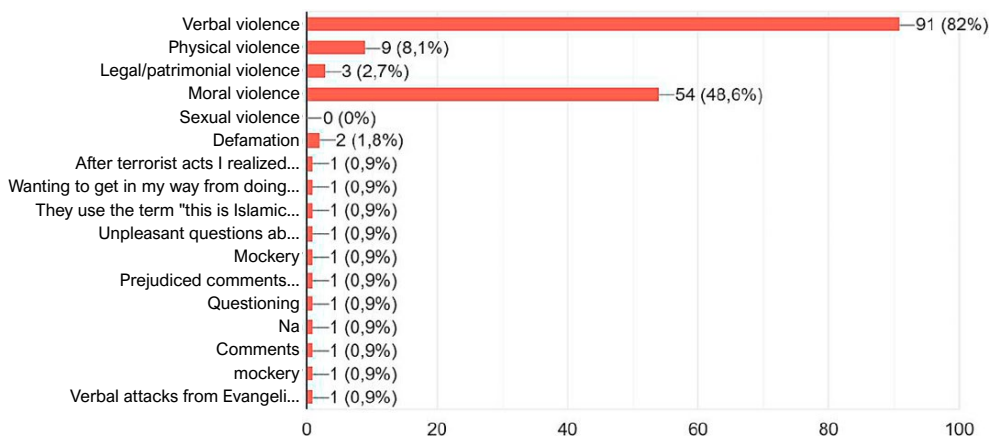
113 answers



- Religion
- Appearance (clothing, beard)
- Both
- Religion as well as the reason previously mentioned
- First and second item.
- Eating habits and difficulties to do salat.
- A lot of false information on the religion, which makes them react negative...

## Type of violence suffered: (More than one option can be selected)

111 answers



As the data suggest, the violence suffered by born and reverted Muslim men happen **mostly in the street (54.5%)**, often due to the clothes they wear, followed by the work environment, university and at home after reverting. These types of violence are mostly verbal (82%) and moral (48.6%). It is noteworthy that **26.4% of reverted Muslim men** suffer some kind of embarrassment at home due to their acceptance of Islam, which demonstrates both the lack of knowledge about the religion on the part of the family and a biased knowledge that sees in Muslims an Other with whom there is no room for compromise, leaving only the refusal and, in extreme cases, the elimination.

In Brazil, everything that differs from European and North American standards is seen with inappropriate eyes by part of the population, either because of the religion or because of the characteristic clothing. Muslims (reverted and/or born) carry the stigma of the episodes of September 11, 2001, meaning that everyone who has characteristics associated with Muslim populations is considered wrong, liable to be offended regardless of the environment where these people are. Such offenses/instances of violence are made mostly verbally, but also physically and morally. Consequently, we list comments from Muslim men, whether they were born or reverted, who suffered some type of violence as a result of their religion, the places where the violence occurred and also the relationship that prejudice has with the individual according to their perception. Analogously, we divided the comments according to some topics such as: I) *Assaults that refer to verbal aggression*: involving implicitly and explicitly prejudiced comments, either by the family itself at a festive event, or in public places with unknown people; II) *Reversion*: violence against all those who were

not Muslim before and, by their own decision, decided to revert to Islam; III) *Being an Arab*: referring to the difficulties of having an Arab appearance in a predominantly Christian country; IV) *Terrorism/otherness*: relating the individual to terrorism and the lack of respect for the nature of the other; V) *Hijab/taqiya*: violence against the characteristic clothing of Muslim populations; VI) *Public space*: all violence carried out in public places; VII) *Discrimination at work*: difficulties encountered in the labor market and in professional areas by practitioners of Islam; VIII) *Academy/university*: different types of violence in academic or university-related spaces.

For a better understanding by the reader, we have listed below expressions used by respondents in the spaces reserved for comments and which we use for our reflections and analyzes on how what they understand as Islamophobia happens.

## VERBAL AGGRESSION

**Situation 1:** The vast majority, if they see themselves as even minimally close to you or not even then, will make the joke of “Just don’t blow me up” and laugh at it themselves.

**Situation 2:** Xenophobic comment: Brazilians don’t have enough here, and you come and take our opportunities.

## REVERSION

**Situation 1:** I am the first Muslim in my family. I was Catholic as a child and Evangelical from adolescence to 38 (From a very traditional church). I started going to a mosque and reading the Quran in secret. I went through a process of serious depression. I found comfort and rationality in everything I heard, read and saw in Islam. I was one of the church leaders and I didn’t fit in anymore. I started to realize that everything I said there had more to do with Islam than with Christianity itself. I got some publications including the Quran itself (translated and in Pocket version). It was a huge paradigm shift. I did the shahada at Mesquita Brasil in January 2020 even without anyone’s support.

**Situation 2:** At the beginning of my reversion my wife showed great repulsion towards the religion, she said that I would change everything, that now I would let a “sh\*” dictate my life, that I didn’t know what I was getting into.

**Situation 3:** Mother doesn't take it well and criticizes it at every opportunity.

**Situation 4:** As for the family (father and brothers), I heard things like "he became a suicide bomber", "I'm worried about him (talking to my wife)", "you were always very obedient, right", "and that time you drank, the girlfriends... now you're a saint", "your religion doesn't fit in Brazil, the culture is very different".

**Situation 5:** It was too much for me once I reverted. But the peace, gratitude, and purpose that filled my heart protect me like a shield. In fact, it was God all along. I was also facing the grief of my mother's death and the stress/harassment of medical residency... I started therapy a few months after my reversion and it was very important.

**Situation 6:** Extreme religious racism by my mother and mockery while reciting Salat at work.

**Situation 7:** At home I am getting my wife to accept the religion. At work people see it with curiosity and sometimes with prejudice.

**Situation 8:** Snarky comments against the religion. People in my inner circle made jokes about the religion and my new way of living life in particular.

**Situation 9:** I try to keep my religious practice discreet.

**Situation 10:** When people (colleagues and acquaintances) found out that I am Muslim, they changed their treatment, frequency in conversations and started to treat me differently, showing discomfort with my presence and that I am not welcome in some circles. In some cases, they made discreet jokes and others not so discreet.

**Situation 11:** Because I stopped drinking alcohol.

## BEING ARAB

**Situation 1:** When they ask me where I'm from? I say: I'm Arab! They say: suicide bomber or terrorist. I feel very embarrassed, but I don't care. I was always seen as a great Hydrographer, however, after seeing me praying and confirming that I am Muslim, I lost some jobs and other companies simply don't communicate with me anymore. Once a man pulled a gun on me because I defended my wife on the street.



**Situation 2:** Just for having an Arabic name, I suffered a lot of prejudice in the South of *Santa Catarina*, when they learn my name, they ask if I'm Brazilian, where I'm from, about Islam and wars in Arabia and phrases about suicide bombers.

## TERRORISM / OTHERNESS

**Situation 1:** The first time a long time ago: they said Muslims/Arabs were terrorists and they all should die.

**Situation 2:** The teacher told my son that Islam has no logic.

**Situation 3:** My wife was called a terrorist, I was called a suicide bomber.

**Situation 4:** During the Ramadan fast, I was repeatedly offered pork. Likewise, it is difficult to carry out salat, despite being a civil servant.

**Situation 5:** Jokes, provocations, xenophobic comments in general.

**Situation 6:** I was visited by dawa brothers at work and people were bothered.

**Situation 7:** Violence mostly comes from evangelical practitioners who want to impose their thoughts at all costs... no respect on the part of these brothers.

**Situation 8:** Someone from college made jokes about terrorism.

**Situation 9:** Usually from the ones who know my name and religion... Associating with terrorist groups or some kind of wishful need that a Muslim has to blow himself up.

## HIJAB / TAQIYA

**Situation 1:** My daughter's hijab was ripped off.

**Situation 2:** There is discrimination against the clothes, I noticed this in the dawas. The mere use of a taqiyah can arouse prejudice in some places.

## PUBLIC SPACE

**Situation 1:** I was reading the Quran on the bus and an old lady was sitting next to me staring at me and I didn't care at first. When I looked at her, she asked me if "this was our holy book", "if we didn't believe in Jesus as our savior and God etc." and I answered politely, but the questions didn't stop coming

and it started to annoy me because if someone has a bible on the bus, no one asks questions, but now because I was reading the Quran, someone came to annoy me. And she asked in an emphatic way, I would even say a little afraid. She asked me why “we” ‘don’t eat pork’ etc. It was pretty unpleasant.

**Situation 2:** I was embarrassed for fasting during Ramadan.

**Situation 3:** Most prejudice comes from ideas created by the media, people trust media information as true even if it is wrong or unfounded.

**Situation 4:** I was walking down the street with the Sheik, we were going to the Mosque, and I saw the behavior of several people commenting words like suicide bomber, bin Laden.

## DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

**Situation 1<sup>2</sup>:** When I worked in IT at Lojas Renner, I suffered discrimination from colleagues, I was called a terrorist and other offensive words. When Israel started bombing Gaza, these colleagues brought balloons and confetti to throw in our room, when someone asked the reason for the balloons and confetti, they said that the balloons represent Israeli missiles, and the confetti are Palestinian children flying up from the explosions. I asked them to stop it, but I was fired. Another thing that happened was at my house, my neighbors sent their children to throw stones at my house, to offend me and my family, they would cause turmoil in front of my house just to torment us, since I didn’t react, they started trying to commit physical violence, that’s when I had to call the police because these neighbors had drug dealer friends and I was worried about my family. In the end I had to leave and put my house up for rent.

**Situation 2:** At work (medical field) there’s always someone random making Islamophobic comments, like “your people like to kill people”, “your religion encourages terrorism”, “your wife didn’t convert because it’s hard for women, right”, “your God doesn’t like women, right”, “I don’t understand anything about your religion, but I’m a very critical person and I would never accept the way your religion treats women”, “with that beard you wouldn’t be allowed

<sup>2</sup> In **situation 1**, we can highlight that there are some civil/labor offenses and crimes happening at the same time, as in the following report. Racism is very clear, as well as discrimination in the workplace – which lead to different consequences (labor and civil compensation and criminal penalties).

into the United States, huh”, “you look like a Mohamed”, “I love Paris but the problem with France is the Muslims”, “in an Islamic country you wouldn’t be able to hug your wife like in Brazil”, “I loved Turkey, but it’s a Muslim country right, other than that it’s great”, “they got to your head for you to convert, right, good gracious”, “while you pray I work”, “in Islamic countries they force children to follow Islam”, “your colleagues persecute the church and they kill Christians there”.

**Situation 3:** Internet attacks are what I suffered the most.

## ACADEMIA/UNIVERSITY

**Situation 1:** My master’s advisor said, when I got approved in an extension program at an American university, that I should shave, not say that I am Muslim and if necessary lie if I want to have a career in research.

**Situation 2:** I was humiliated by a professor at the University and I told him that I would not discuss this subject with him in front of people out of respect and he kept telling me that I was not there to learn civil engineering but to destroy buildings, so I called him a senseless ignorant and left the room and went straight to the University dean’s office and told the secretary that if she doesn’t want me to sue the University that I immediately have a word with the Dean, so she called him and I told him everything that happened. Then, the professor was immediately called, and when he saw me in the dean’s office, he tried to attack me, in the end I restrained him and then the professor was never seen at the University again.

About feeling whether or not they had their rights violated, and if so, which ones:

## NO

**Situation 1:** “They only say what they hear in the global media, lack of information and search for the truth”.

**Situation 2:** “Nothing like this has happened yet. The only thing that has happened was the fact that I was in a mall and realized that I was being followed by security guards who were communicating by radio when I passed by.”

**Situation 3:** “No because I don’t think it was out of ignorance, but out of lack of knowledge and consciously. Often the other side makes some crude Islamophobic joke.”

**Situation 4:** “No, but it is upsetting.”

**Situation 5:** “I do not allow violations to go without an immediate verbal response.”

**Situation 6:** “No. Even though my mom didn’t take it well, she didn’t try to forbid it or anything.”

## YES

**Situation 1:** Because the words were clearly directed at my companions, however, they hit me hard.

**Situation 2:** Yes, coming and going, scared looks from people.

**Situation 3:** Freedom of expression and the right to religion.

**Situation 4:** We live in a secular country, and this should not happen.

**Situation 5:** Right to freedom and willingness to choose and practice my religion.

**Situation 6:** Freedom of expression is always disrespected.

**Situation 7:** Always treated with suspicion.

**Situation 8:** When visiting the bank, the right to a job, the right to worship.

**Situation 9:** Yes. The right to come and go, the freedom to read a book without being disturbed.

**Situation 10:** I am currently suing the Brazilian state for violated rights. I was arrested and barred from hiring a lawyer, I was exposed for leaking a state agent and I was the victim of procedural fraud as the justifications for my arrest were known to be false and were used to deceive the judge.

**Situation 11:** I have already won three lawsuits against media outlets and there are still more than a dozen lawsuits in progress.

**Situation 12:** In the next question, I will answer yes, as I took the most serious cases to court.

**Situation 13:** Yes, the right to human dignity.

**Situation 14:** My freedom of belief disrespected. But our sisters suffer worse things.

**Situation 15:** Yes, my right to have freedom of speech, freedom to talk to my brothers in public spaces.

**Situation 16:** The right to live in peace in the country where I was born.

**Situation 17:** Promotion at work and persecution.

**Situation 18:** Sometimes I feel that they have been violated, because they make links to terrorism. There are people who look at me with distrust.

**Situation 19:** To freely express my faith.

**Situation 20:** Alhamdulillah, so far, I have only suffered minor damage, but I recognize that Islamophobia exists.

**Situation 21:** Not as a Muslim.

**Situation 22:** Air tickets to a certain country.

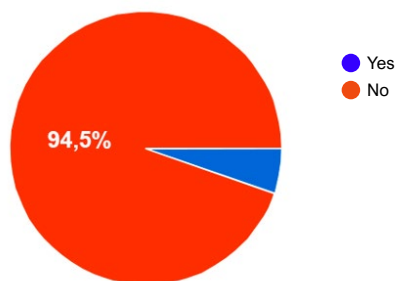
**Situation 23:** The media demonizes Islam and there is no response to counterbalance this negative information spread about ISLAM; we don't have radio stations like Evangelicals and Catholics.

**Situation 24:** No, I just tried to show that my choice was good for me.

**Situation 25:** As a Brazilian Muslim I feel that our identity, culture and religiosity should be more inserted in all areas, schools, colleges, public places so that everyone knows that it is also part of everyday life! I feel the right to follow my religion has been violated, due to lack of information, and wrong information, that Google searches offer users!

## Did you file a police report to register the instance of violence that occurred?

110 answers



### IF YOU FEEL THAT YOUR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, DO YOU FEEL CAPABLE OF REPORTING IT AND FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH LEGAL PROCEEDINGS? IF NOT, CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE REASONS WHY?

**Situation 1:** I've never felt this, if something serious happens, I won't report it, it's a waste of time.

**Situation 2:** Need to be inserted in society and in the work environment. A native Brazilian might not understand this perfectly, but it's very important for someone with few acquaintances/friends in a big country like Brazil.

**Situation 3:** When you don't expect something to happen, it's hard to prepare to collect evidence. Everyone finds the abuse absurd, but no one wants to testify.

**Situation 4:** I study law, but honestly, I prefer to ignore it because these situations don't affect me yet.

**Situation 5:** There is no support or awareness on the subject, just like in cases of crimes against Black people and women.

**Situation 6:** Yes, if necessary. In general, haters are just cowards. When a firm and immediate response is given, they back off.

**Situation 7:** No, because I think that the religion needs more dissemination, and we as Muslims must also have a good behavior before society, so that we can be tolerated.

**Situation 8:** No, because the institutions are not interested in changing this.

**Situation 9:** Fear, the reality is that fear always makes us incapable of being

able to fight for our rights, unfortunately evil still transforms our wills.

**Situation 10:** As for harassment issues, the answers are always very careful so I don't seem intolerant, and there is no way to legally impose or demand respect, because that would isolate me professionally. It's difficult to navigate in this environment, but God has made many things easier for me.

**Situation 11:** I am not capable to report it because I don't feel safe and I don't know how to report it.

**Situation 12:** It is a social embarrassment and many people do not realize that they reproduce discriminatory attitudes, so a legal procedure would not help much.

**Situation 13:** I think it was a lack of knowledge, because the media in general demonizes the religion, but many times people, after having a frank and honest conversation, respected it in my case, questioning religious aspects out of curiosity.

**Situation 14:** I have no experience with legal procedures, and I don't trust the institutions very much because I see that several complaints against Islamophobia are not addressed, regardless of there being videos and other evidence, Islamophobia is almost always understood as freedom of expression, and it doesn't seem to be very wrong in the eyes of the state. I have also denounced numerous posts and pages that are Islamophobic on social networks and the posts and pages have never been removed because they "do not go against the guidelines", but I have already had posts removed for denouncing genocides as committed by the Zionist "state" in Palestine. So, since impartiality is just a facade, I also don't feel safe going to court proceedings, I already know the result in advance.

**Situation 15:** If it happens, I will take appropriate action according to the situation, severity and different implications.

**Situation 16:** I do not give up my rights to be a Muslim.

**Situation 17:** In Brazil we still don't have the custom of taking certain cases to court. Perhaps because of the difficulties in being served free of charge.

**Situation 18:** In Brazil, the police are a vector of Christians. Muslims, Candomblé, Umbanda etc. are not respected by the authorities, who think that Brazil is a Christian country.

**Situation 19:** No. Because I'm underage and I think it's better to accept the prejudice, because it could lead to family problems. But if I could report it, I would.

**Situation 20:** Pervasive negative comments must be countered with true information about ISLAM that I always try to convey; need for creation of Islamic radios.

**Situation 21:** I think people's ignorance of Islam is what has led them to these mistakes.

**Situation 22:** Yes, the moment it goes from a simple joke to public and religious humiliation!

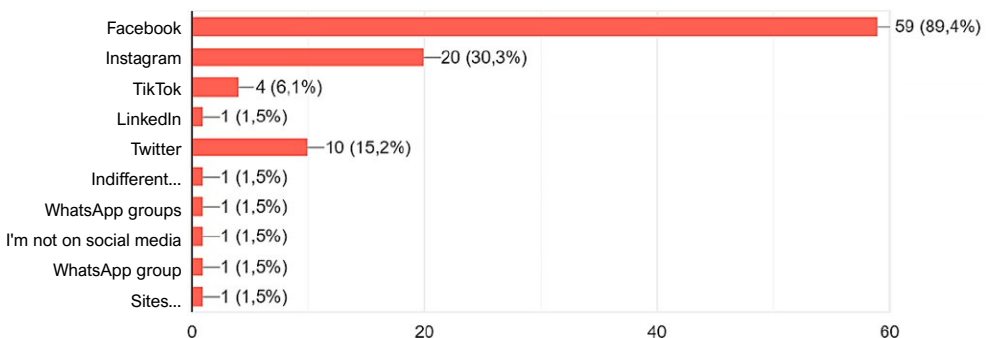
### Have you ever been a target of prejudice on social media for being Muslim?

112 answers



### If so, in which social network did this happen? (More than one option can be selected)

66 answers





This report suggests that verbal and even physical attacks on Muslims in our country are commonplace. However, more than 90% of men do not file a police report, which leads to underreporting of the data and reduces the visibility of these events in other surveys on religious intolerance. There is a large amount of virtual aggression, mainly on the social networks that are most used: they stand out mainly on Facebook, at 89.4%, followed by Instagram, 30.3%, and Twitter, 15%. Analogously to this, it is noted that currently in Brazil there is a large number of prejudiced comments and also of persecution of Muslims, as well as those who reverted to Islam: in our experience, when there is a Muslim expressing themselves in some media space, comments and verbal attacks appear on the platforms where such expressions are/were published. This is reflected in the normalization of aggression against Muslims in virtual environments.

When the interviewees were asked if they, individually, had already been targets of prejudice in social networks due to the fact that they were Muslims, a large number of reports of experiences that could be classified into the following topics were noted: I) *Implicit and explicit prejudice with Muslims*: comments that make hatred towards the religion clear, either emphatically or subtly; II) *Religious persecution and misinformation regarding Islam*: which is directly related to the lack of information regarding the religion and also with the persecution of people who are Muslims (both born and reverted) in Brazil. These comments will be highlighted next.

## IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT PREJUDICE WITH MUSLIMS

**Situation 1:** It is very common, but, in general, they are attacks devoid of knowledge about the Islamic religion and culture.

**Situation 2:** Things happen suddenly. I had a network on Facebook that involved people of various nationalities, some of whom I knew personally and others not. Suddenly everything was deleted when I changed my phone. The question remains... Is it normal or was it on purpose? To this day, I don't know. I only recovered some of the contacts.

**Situation 3:** Several times in debates on the internet I have received offensive responses against our beloved Prophet and many distortions and lies about Islam. People hate without knowing.

**Situation 4:** Usually posts distorting and inventing more outlandish things about Islam, or informative posts about Islam in which people would comment

offensive things and I was willing to explain, try to help them understand what is factual and what is not about Islam, then I got all sorts of insults and statements about me and my religion. Other times on social networks were in private where people came to attack me stating untrue things about Islam and about Muslims.

**Situation 5:** Once, a Muslim friend told me that there was a girl who bothered her because she shared Islamic posts. This girl posted profanity and insults to Islam, to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and humiliated my colleague. So I went to talk to the girl for her to stop, but it was in vain. She cursed me with several bad words and worse, she went back to insulting the Prophet SAW, Quran and Islam. She said that Muslims were invading Brazil and that Islam needed to be eradicated. She praised the New Zealand terrorist who killed several Muslims in two mosques in New Zealand. I have screenshots of the conversation.

**Situation 6:** A pastor asked me to accept him thinking he had been a student where I taught. Others called me a terrorist. At PUC, I participated in a work on Islam. One professor was highly Islamophobic. But we had a heated discussion, but I put him in his place.

**Situation 7:** Occasionally my Arab origin and religion are commented in a negative and even prejudiced way. They don't go without an immediate response.

**Situation 8:** Any terrorist attack that takes place around the world leads to getting messages as if I were to blame. I was a candidate for councilor in São Paulo. And I also suffered the prejudice firsthand.

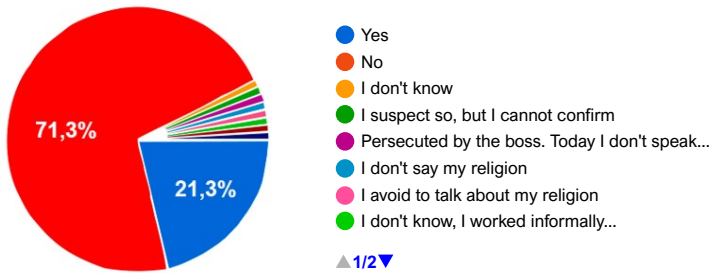
## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND MISINFORMATION REGARDING ISLAM

**Situation 1:** I'm afraid to comment on certain absurdly wrong things that I see on the net, in an attempt to clarify, so as not to expose myself and receive a lot of comments from people who don't have a shred of morals or ethics in virtual conversations. And there is no point in reporting it to the websites as I received responses that they do not violate the guidelines.

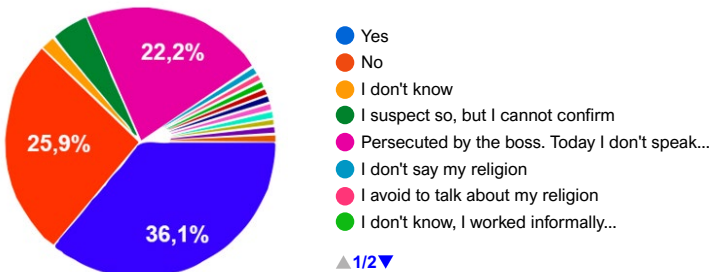
**Situation 2:** I was an evangelical Christian, when I converted, I had to exclude all those who were Christians, as they questioned me a lot saying that I was a crazy fanatical, that God (Allah) is a false god.

**Situation 3:** An Evangelical pretending to be Muslim harassed me with fake profiles, and kept calling me MUHAMMAD (saws) mockingly, and wanting to debate his knowledge based on Christianity against the religion, I blocked him and from time to time I change my name on Facebook to prevent people like that from adding me.

**Have you ever lost your job or an opportunity/promotion because of the religion?**  
108 answers



**In your relationship with coworkers, for being Muslim, you are:**  
108 answers



**DIFFICULTIES WITHIN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

**Situation 1:** I work in a company where the presidents are Muslim. However, some non-Muslim leaders persecute African Muslims, I try to defend them in some way.

**Situation 2:** At first, my coworkers question it, but the first thing I did was organize myself for my prayers at work maintaining a correct conduct, and that has helped me a lot.

**Situation 3:** They feigned respect but would gossip and make jokes.

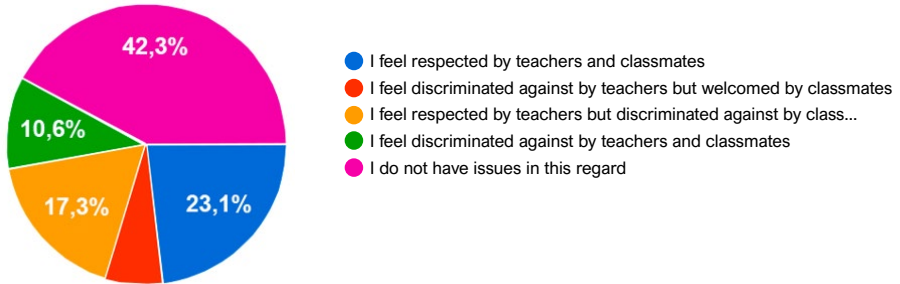
**Situation 4:** Offended.

**Situation 5:** I don't talk about my religion at work.

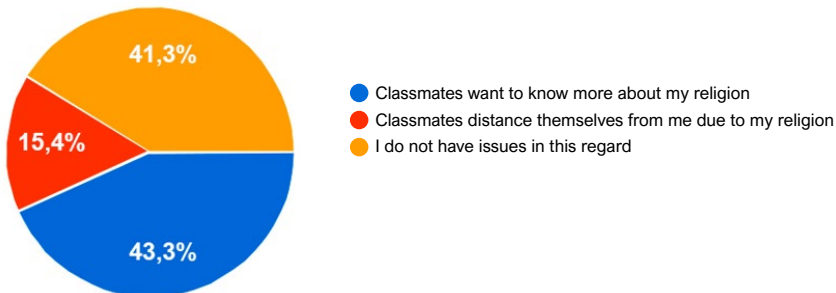
**Situation 6:** Treated with reservations because of religion, and occasionally with great respect.

**Situation 7:** I was mistreated, but I didn't get carried away by other people's opinion. And I exerted my influence on the situation by externalizing my religion.

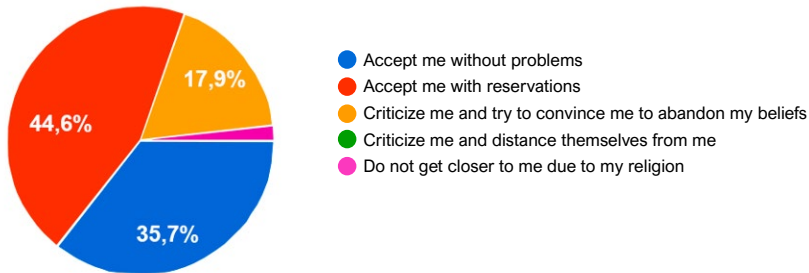
**In your school or university environment:  
104 answers**



**Still regarding your school or university environment:  
104 answers**

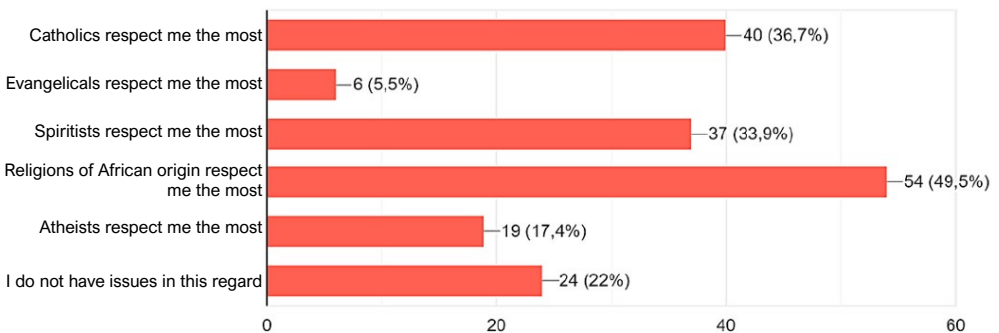


**In your opinion, people you interact with but that are from other religions:  
112 answers**



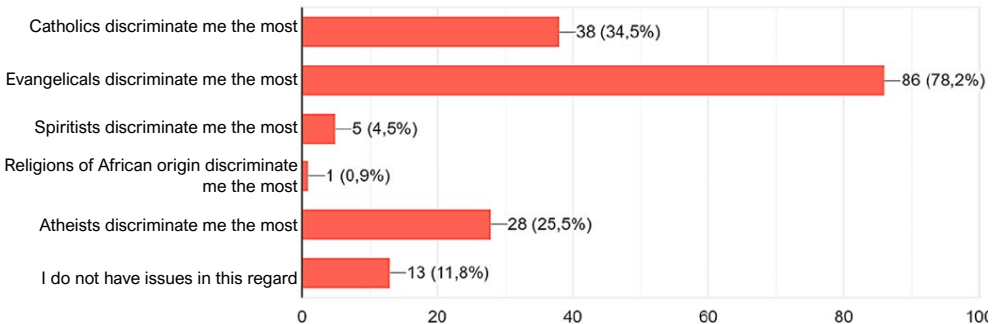
**People of which religion different than yours respect you the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

109 answers



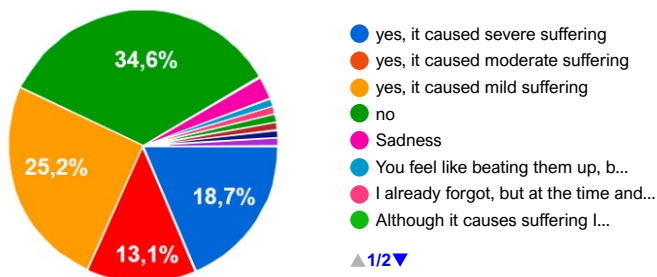
**People of which religion different than yours discriminate you the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

110 answers



## Having experienced an instance of violence against your religion, did this situation cause any level of suffering?

107 answers



**Situation 1:** You feel like beating them up, but Allah is watching everything.

**Situation 2:** I already forgot, but at the time and for a few days I was very upset.

**Situation 3:** Although it causes suffering, I rely on God and feel good.

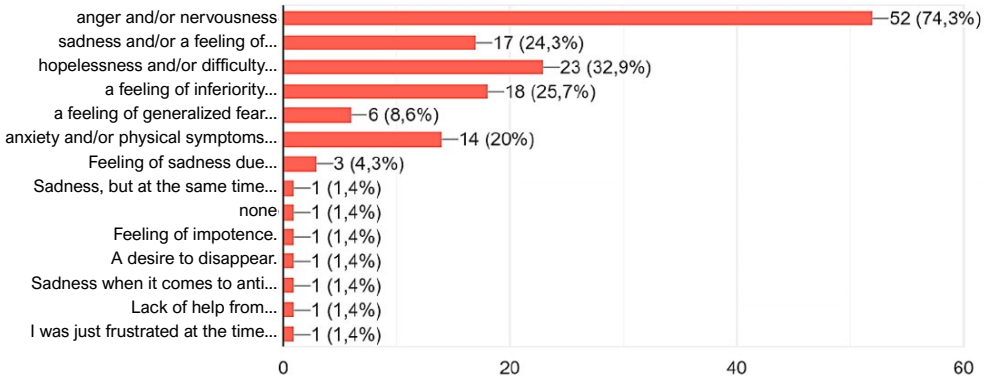
**Situation 4:** Despite having already experienced numerous cases of religious intolerance, I try not to take it personally, but I feel sad, not for myself, but for the way we are seen. Of course, I cannot generalize and say that everyone has a distorted view of Islam, but I believe that a good part of this distortion is due to the media and/or those who are in power, who are looking out for their interests and therefore do anything for their own benefit.

**Situation 5:** It can cause depression if the discrimination comes from people you've known for a long time. You start thinking about the burial as a Muslim, not being respected afterwards etc.

**Situation 6:** No. Facing this situation is part of jihad, an effort to become a better person.

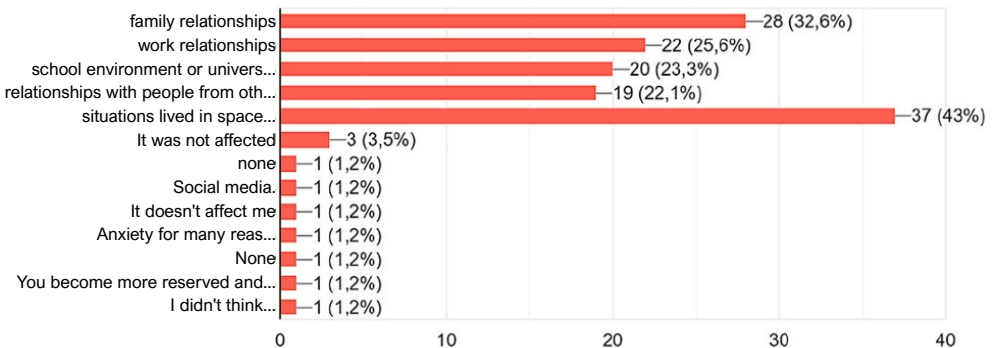
**If you answered yes to the previous question, what feelings are related to this suffering? (More than one option can be selected)**

**70 answers**



**What situations seem to have affected your mental health the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

**86 answers**



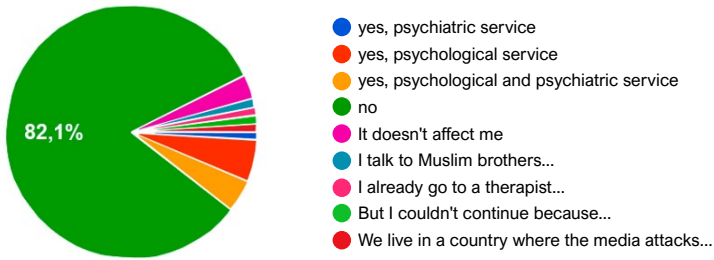
**Situation 1:** I talk to Muslim brothers who are more experienced. I find refuge in Allah, the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (may Allah exalt its mention).

**Situation 2:** I already go to a therapist, so I talked about it with my psychologist.

**Situation 3:** But I couldn't continue because I became unemployed.

**Situation 4:** We live in a country where the media attacks our religion daily; that's what needs treatment.

**After the situation experienced, did you seek any professional mental health service?**  
**95 answers**



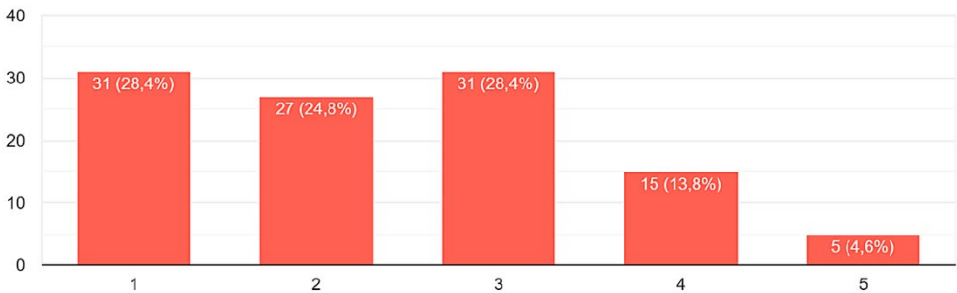
For the following questions:

1 - Strongly agree

5 - Strongly disagree

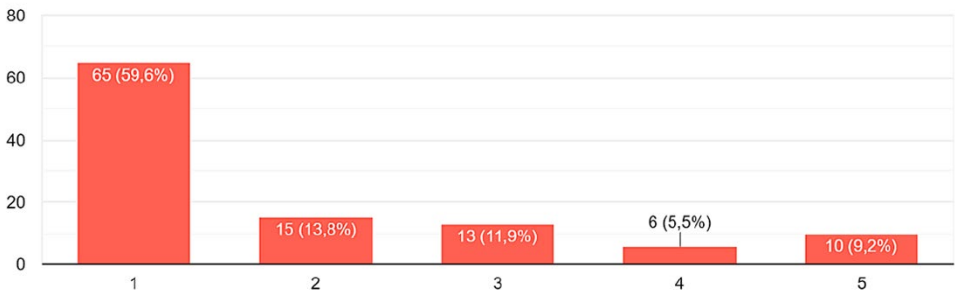
**Most Brazilians are afraid of Muslims.**

**109 answers**



**Islam is represented negatively in Brazilian media.**

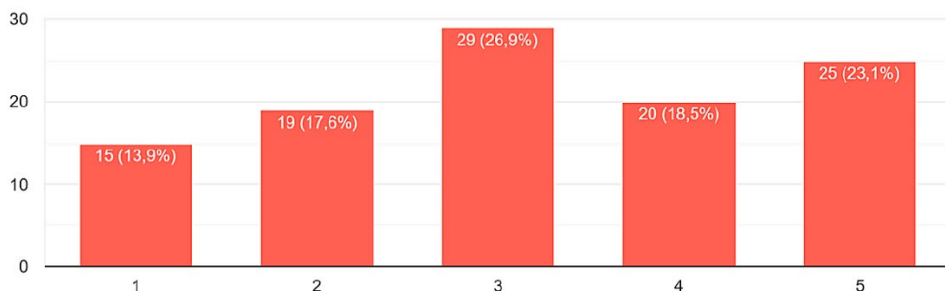
**109 answers**





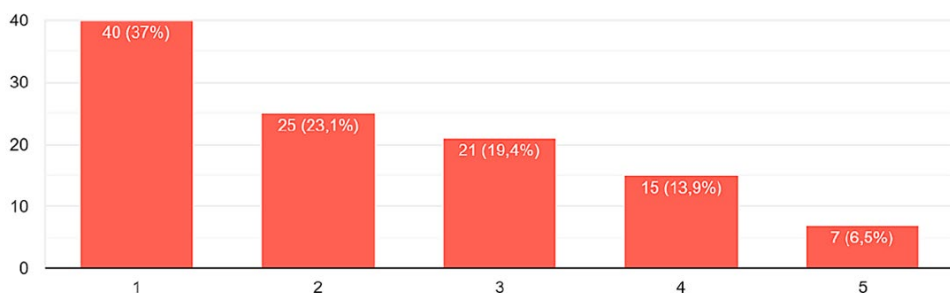
### Generally speaking, few Brazilians are afraid of Islam and Muslims.

108 answers



### Most Brazilians perceive Islam as a threat to their culture.

108 answers



When it comes to the work relationship, only 21.3% reported having lost their job because they were Muslim. They state that, in general, they are treated with respect by their colleagues, while 25.9% reported that they are treated with reservations. At the university/school they also report not having problems of this nature, but 17% say they have problems with classmates, but not with teachers. However, there is something deserving of attention with regards to their relationship with people of other religious affiliations: those of religions of African origin stand out as more tolerant and respectful, unlike Evangelicals, who were indicated as the most intolerant of Muslims by 72.2% of participants.

We also raise concern regarding the mental health of people who suffer aggression: in the survey, **18.7% reported severe suffering**, 13% moderate suffering and 25.2% mild suffering. The feelings most highlighted by the respondents are: **anger and nervousness (74.5%)**, hopelessness, sadness and anxiety. In general, the situations that cause these feelings are experienced in public space (43%) and in the family (32.6%). However, **82% did not seek psychological care**.

Below are some comments from respondents on the topics presented.

## REGIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BRAZIL

**Situation 1:** Brazilians are seen as welcoming people to foreigners, but this actually happens only superficially. When the foreigner's habits and traditions differ greatly from their culture, the same xenophobic behaviors that happen in other countries are observed.

**Situation 2:** It takes courage to be a Muslim and still wear a beard (Sunnah) in Brazil.

**Situation 3:** Brazil is not the most intolerant country in the world towards Islam, but even so, it requires measures so that a malicious image of our religion is not built based on lies, false ideologies, generalizations associated with violence and negativities.

**Situation 4:** I would like the media misinformation about Islam, Muslims and Muslim countries that invades many Brazilian homes to be hard stopped and fought and that true information would be broadcast, I would like satisfactory awareness in schools and in public spaces about religious freedom (which includes Islam) and the importance of the State being Secular, to combat ignorance and prejudice used as a weapon by the elites against Muslims, gypsies, indigenous peoples, black people and other minorities.

## ISLAMOFOBIA POR PRATICANTES DE OUTRAS RELIGIÕES

**Situation 1:** I suffered prejudice from my ex-wife's family, who was Evangelical.

**Situation 2:** The most fervent Christians usually lament that I am no longer a Christian, that Christ has lost a soldier, or attack me with news spread by pastors about "the persecuted church" and "ex-Muslim reports". A few Christians I know actually embraced me and said that Christians needed to have the discipline of Muslims and told me that Islam is an inspiration for their own religious practice. These were actually a couple of Evangelical medical students, of whom I was a preceptor.

**Situation 3:** Jewish people who do not practice the religion or esoteric people who walk in various religions were the most aggressive.

## COMMENTS RELATED TO POLITICAL NATURE

**Situation 1:** Islam is a religion of peace and love, and there are people who want to distort the image of Islam and Muslims for political reasons.

**Situation 2:** Although I am progressive, I feel an aggressive prejudice against Islam in the left-wing circles, which is not very different from the prejudice on the part of people of other religions.

## RELIGIOUS OR GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT ISLAMOPHOBIA

**Situation 1:** There is only one God, and Muhammad is his messenger.

**Situation 2:** I still think that the ignorance of other cultures and religions has been very much the main factor for religious prejudice.

**Situation 3:** In general, people always look at the religion strangely.

**Situation 4:** I am sure about my religion, but I feel a lot of prejudice towards myself and my religion.

## DENIAL OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

**Situation 1:** There are not many problems, some isolated cases with some women wearing scarves, the problem is the global media that wants to defame the religion. I think here in Brazil it's pretty peaceful.

**Situation 2:** Those who are afraid do not mistreat or speak badly. No one mistreats a militiaman or drug dealer.

## IMPACTS OF COVID (SOCIAL ISOLATION) ON SITUATIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

**Situation 1:** I would like to answer this questionnaire again when the pandemic is over and normality returns, because I am sure episodes of intolerance will happen again. Our society is almost a neo-Pentecostal society, the secularity of the State exists only on paper. We always have to denounce abuses and come together as a community.

## EXPERIENCES OF INTERNAL PREJUDICE (FROM MUSLIMS AGAINST MUSLIMS)

**Situation 1:** There is prejudice from Muslims against Muslims. Among Muslims from different regions, different denominations, but mainly against reverted Muslims, I say this as a Brazilian reverted Muslim, I don't know about other

countries. I've had problems at the Mosque with other Muslims born in Muslim countries. I continued in the religion because I think that my commitment is to Allah (Praised and Exalted be Allah) and his Messenger (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that Muslims, from whatever place, beginning or resuming, are my brothers, even if they don't seem to think the same and even if for a moment I don't agree with something and I understand that I have a lot to learn.

**Situation 2:** Actually, there is great discrimination against Shiites imposed by Sunnis, something that gains even more strength when they are believed to be followers of the Wahhabiya/Saudi line.

**Situation 3:** The hatred of Islam within Islam itself must also be highlighted. No one fights Islam more than Muslims themselves. No one has openly expressed so much hatred towards me than Muslims themselves. No one tried to diminish me or took a superior position (moral and racial). I would also like to report that we Sufis suffer discrimination in mosques from some adepts of Salafism religion/doctrine in regard to both myself and other Muslims.

## REACTION TO ISLAMOPHOBIA

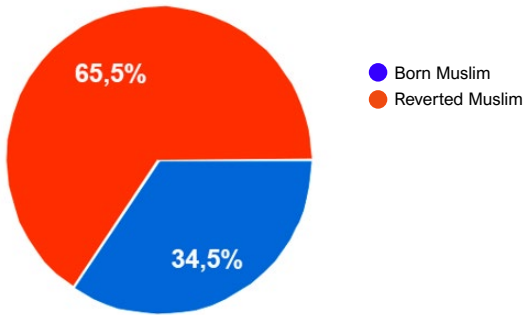
**Situation 1:** I consider the research important, because each one lives their reality in Faith, in its dim. I'm very discreet, and even so I was discriminated against because they saw me wearing a takia, I was at work. It was Friday and I was going to the Mosque. On the way back, they set up a bomb on my table, and they even said that I was a dangerous person for walking like that. All while laughing. I found it absurd, but I didn't say anything at the time. I took it as if nothing had happened. What I did was impose myself, so every Friday, I started wearing takia. No one else said anything and they even started to praise me, saying that I looked good, I got the nickname Rabbi.

## PREJUDICE AGAINST REVERTED MUSLIMS

**Situation 2:** Nowadays I hide my religion at work and in public places, I try to be reserved because of the prejudices I have suffered in the past.

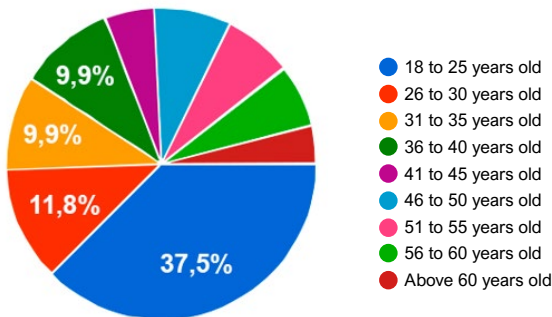
### 2. Female respondents

**You are a:**  
444 answers



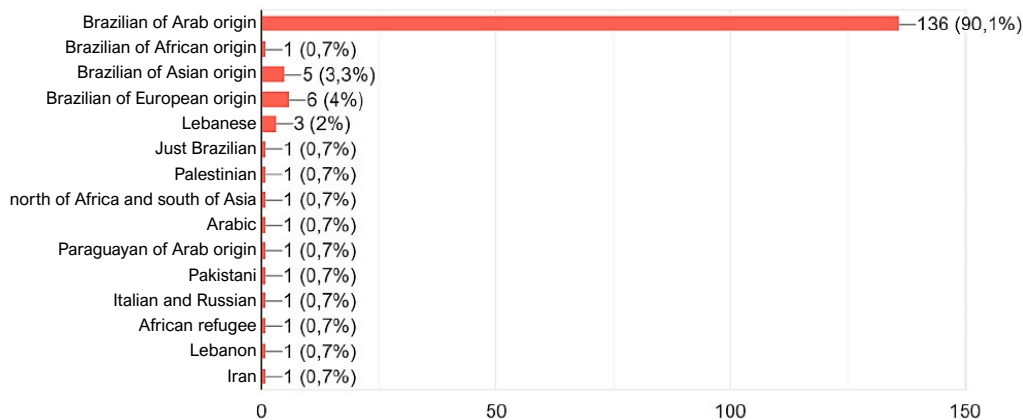
#### 2.1 Born Muslims

**Age:**  
152 answers



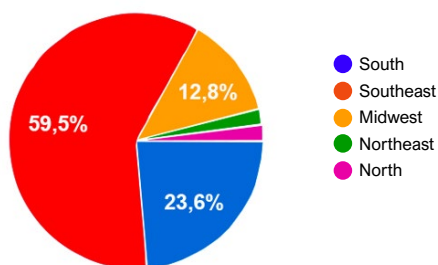
### Ancestry: (More than one option can be selected)

151 answers



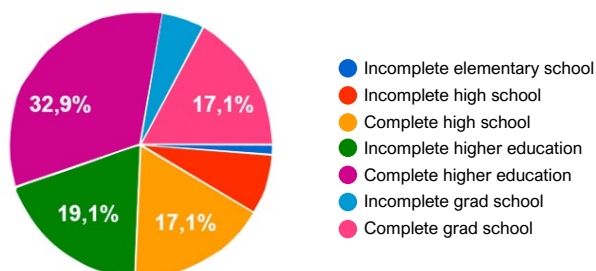
### In which region of Brazil do you reside?

148 answers



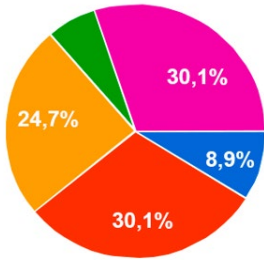
### What is your educational level?

152 answers



**Salary range:**

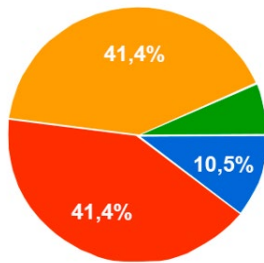
146 answers



- Up to 1 minimum wage
- From 1 to 3 minimum wages
- From 4 to 10 minimum wages
- More than 10 minimum wages
- I am unemployed at the time of the survey

**Are you married? Do you have children?**

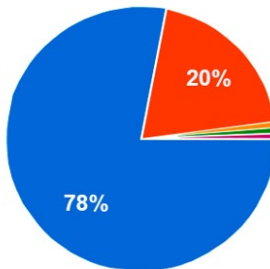
152 answers



- Yes, no children
- Yes, with children
- No, no children
- No, with children

**What tradition do you follow?**

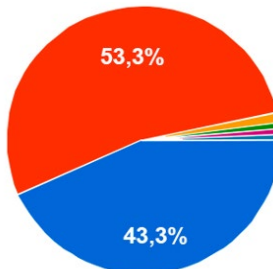
150 answers



- Sunni
- Shiite
- None
- g
- Alaouite

**If you are Arab or of Arab descent, have you ever been discriminated against for having an Arabic last name?**

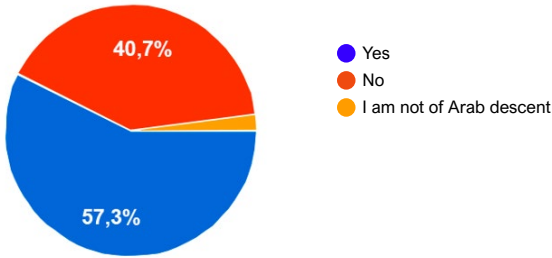
150 answers



- Yes
- No
- I do not have an Arabic last name
- My name is not Arabic
- I'm not of Arab descent, but I have an Arabic last name and have been discriminated for it
- My family name is Persian (not Arabic, not Brazilian), but I was never harassed.

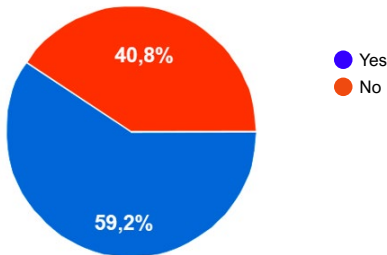
**If you are Arab or of Arab descent, have you ever suffered ethnic-racial discrimination for being Arab?**

150 answers



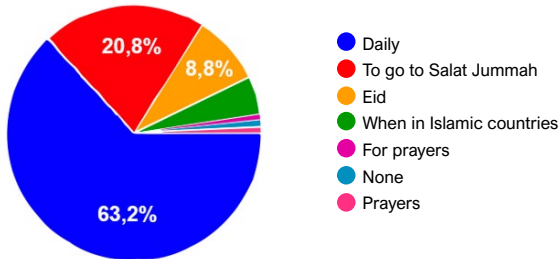
**Do you wear a hijab or any other Islamic clothing (khimar, chador, niqab, shayla, burqa)?**

152 answers



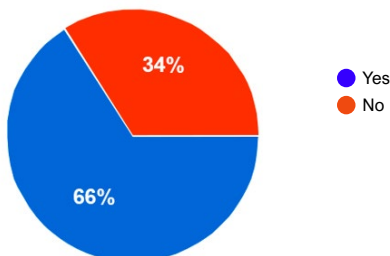
**If so, how often do you wear it? (more than one option can be selected)**

125 answers



**Have you ever experienced any embarrassment due to the religion?**

153 answers



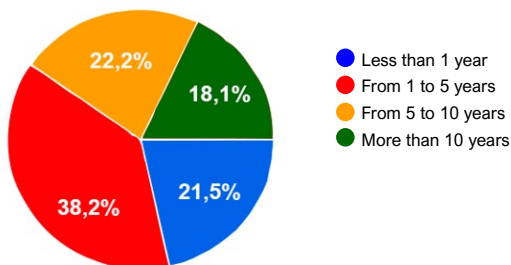


Out of the women who answered the questionnaire, only **34.5% were born into the religion**; in general, respondents were **young women aged 18-25 and women aged 26-30**. Of these women, 90% are of Arab origin and live in the Southeast region. Only 32.9% have completed higher education, and 17% have graduate degrees. We found the same percentage of those who earn up to three minimum wages and are unemployed (**30.1%**) – it is important to note that the survey was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another two percentages that coincided were the number of married women without children (41.5%) and the number of **married women with children (41.4%)**. 78% of respondents follow the Sunni tradition, and 43.3% stated that they have been discriminated against for having an Arabic last name. 57.3% suffered ethnic-racial discrimination, and 66% suffered embarrassment because of the religion. 59.2% of respondents stated they wear a hijab (Islamic veil), with only 63% using it daily.

## 2.2 Muslims reverted to Islam

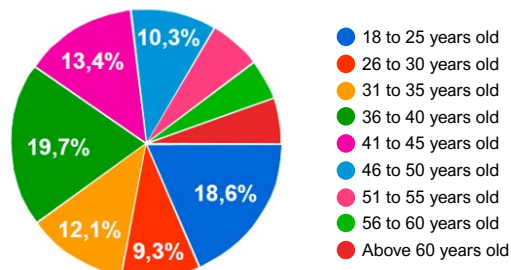
### How long ago were you reverted?

288 answers



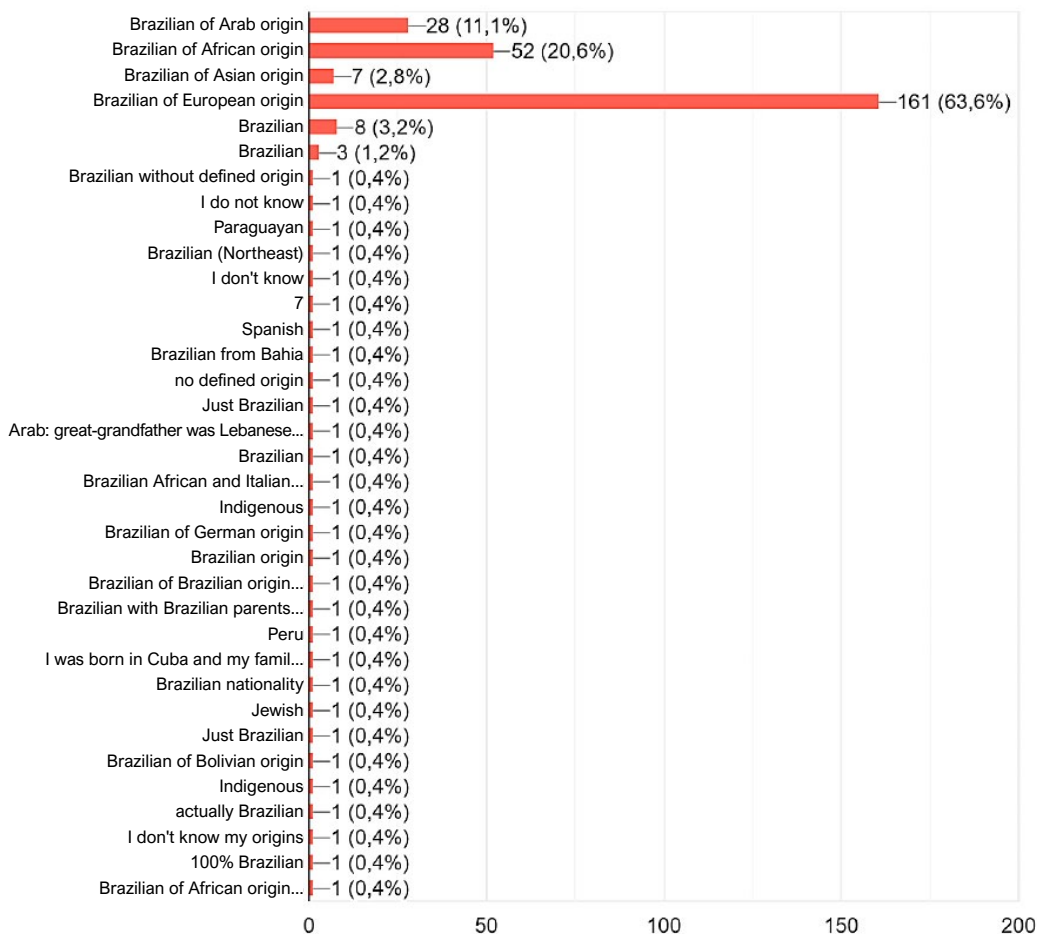
### Age:

290 answers



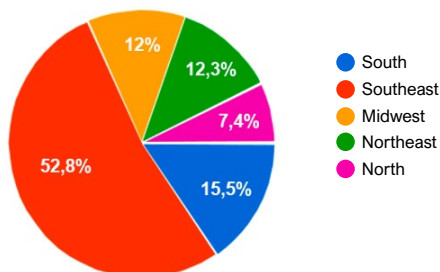
## Ancestry: (More than one option can be selected)

253 answers



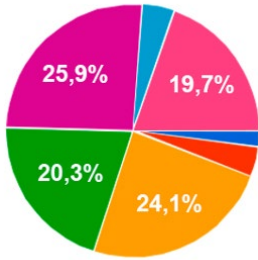
## In which region of Brazil do you reside?

284 answers



### What is your educational level?

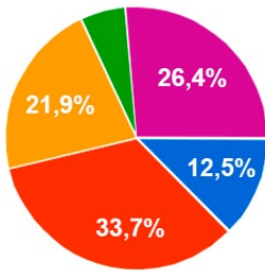
290 answers



- Incomplete elementary school
- Incomplete high school
- Complete high school
- Incomplete higher education
- Complete higher education
- Incomplete grad school
- Complete grad school

### Salary range:

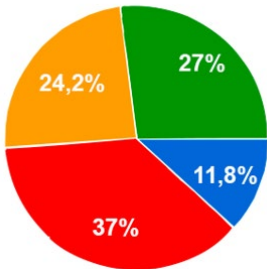
288 answers



- Up to 1 minimum wage
- From 1 to 3 minimum wages
- From 4 to 10 minimum wages
- More than 10 minimum wages
- I am unemployed at the time of the survey

### Are you married? Do you have children?

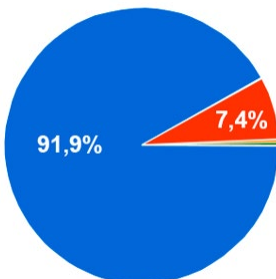
289 answers



- Yes, no children
- Yes, with children
- No, no children
- No, with children

### What tradition do you follow?

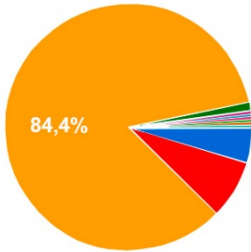
284 answers



- Sunni
- Shiite
- Since I'm recently converted I follow the traditional, can't tell which, I believe it's Sunni, it's the one from Mesquita Brasil.
- Islamic

**If you are of Arab descent, have you ever been discriminated against for having an Arabic last name?**

276 answers

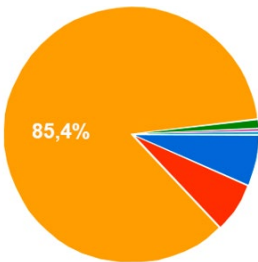


- Yes
  - No
  - I do not have Arab descent
  - Even though I'm not Arabic but my na...
  - I am descendant, by don't have last na...
  - It was changed 4 generations ago in immigration
  - But I always suffer discrimination
  - My ethnicities are Muslim Jewish
- ▲ 1/2 ▼

Regarding descent and discrimination due to surname, there were comments reporting discrimination based on the family name of foreign origin, but some respondents also mentioned having Arab descent, but not an Arabic surname, so that there was no discrimination by that factor.

**If you are of Arab descent, have you ever suffered ethnic-racial discrimination for being Arab?**

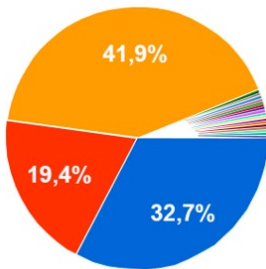
274 answers



- Yes
- No
- I am not of Arab descent
- I am not Arab
- Just "jokes"
- When I was in Israel I was stopped at the airport and got asked several questions about having visited Arabic countries, and my husband did not get those questions. (My husband has...

**After your reversion, do you feel that your relationship with your close relatives (parents, children and partner):**

284 answers



- Remained the same
  - Changed for the better
  - Changed for the worse
  - Did not change, because in a way...
  - My mother (now deceased) did not accept...
  - It remained the same in almost everything...
  - It made it really hard in the beginning, but over t...
  - It changed at first, then went back to...
- ▲ 1/3 ▼

With regard to the reversion of Muslim women, family difficulties were highlighted, especially at the beginning of the reversion, such as feelings of shame on the part of the family, Islamophobia on the part of people close to them and a feeling of fear of talking about the subject. Below are some examples of sentences about the categories described here.

## GREATER DIFFICULTIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVERSION

**Situation 1:** When I reverted it was very difficult, but nowadays it's better.

**Situation 2:** It changed just a little, for a short time and then went on very well.

## FAMILY SHAME UPON REVERSION

**Situation 1:** It remained the same in almost everything, but I noticed that my mother is embarrassed to go out with me on the street.

## ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS

**Situation 1:** My mother (now deceased) did not accept my reversion very well.

**Situation 2:** My family, despite accepting it, still has a huge prejudice against it.

**Situation 3:** My husband is also now a Muslim! His family is of Italian descent and did not accept it and never liked me. I believe it's because I am of Arab descent.

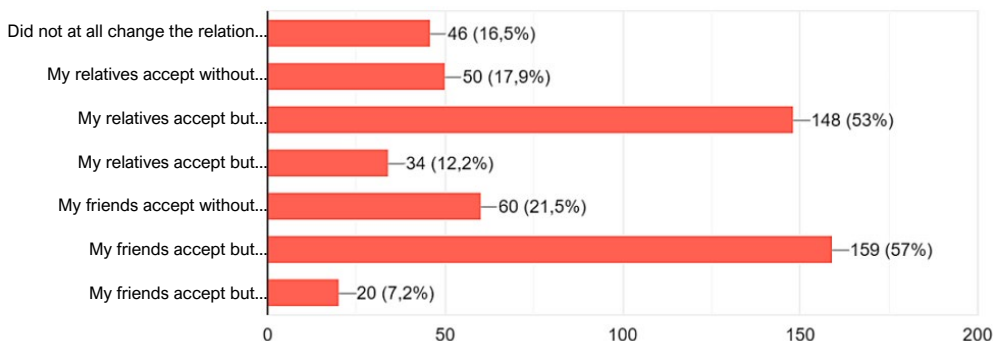
## FEAR OF TALKING ABOUT THE REVERSION

**Situation 1:** I still haven't had the courage to talk about it, for fear of prejudice and rejection.

**Situation 2:** It hasn't changed, because in a way they don't take my reversion seriously and I feel more comfortable that way, so I don't have to face rejection, in a way I end up practicing my religion kind of "on the sly".

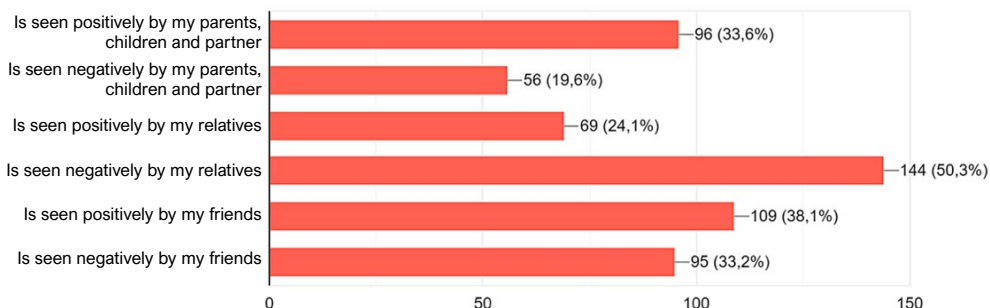
**Still regarding social relationships, but more distant relatives and friends, do you feel that your reversion: (More than one answer can be selected)**

**279 answers**



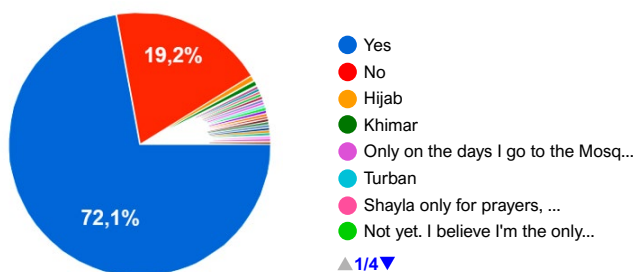
**Still regarding social relationships, do you feel that your reversion: (More than one answer can be selected)**

**286 answers**



**Do you wear a hijab or any other Islamic clothing (khimar, chador, niqab, shayla, burqa)?**

**287 answers**



With regard to the use of Islamic clothing, reverted women refer to it in religious rituals, such as going to the mosque, or during prayers. In addition, there is also a process for starting to use the hijab, for example. Some women even report having stopped using the garments after some time of use. In this sense, the fear of

using Islamic clothing in Brazil was also reported, mainly due to the fear of suffering discrimination and/or prejudiced attacks. Such notes can be seen below.

## FEAR OF USING ISLAMIC CLOTHING IN BRAZIL

**Situation 1:** Shayla only for prayers, entering the Mosque and Islamic establishments out of respect. I live in England, I return to Brazil in a few weeks and I'm worried about using Shayla all the time.

**Situation 2:** Not yet. I believe that I am the only Muslim woman in my city and my fear is that I will start to attract attention and be attacked.

**Situation 3:** But when I'm in Brazil, for safety reasons, I don't wear it.

## LACK OF ACCESS TO THE MOSQUE

**Situation 1:** I haven't done the shahada yet due to the confinement and the distance from a Mosque, so I always cover my head with a veil but it's not the hijab yet, although it's still very similar.

## USE OF HIJAB

**Situation 1:** Only during prayers.

**Situation 2:** Only when I go to the Mosque.

**Situation 3:** I only wear it when I'm in Islamic countries.

**Situation 4:** In process to wear hijab.

**Situation 5:** Not yet, but I will.

## DESISTÊNCIA DE USAR O HIJAB

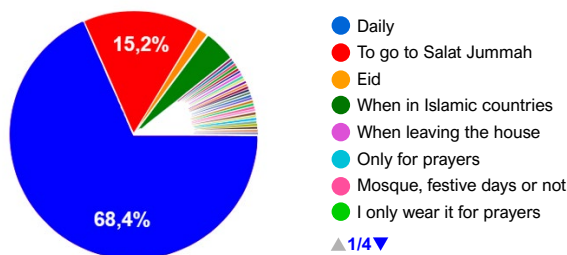
**Situation 1:** I wore it for only 3 years.

**Situation 2:** I wore a hijab for more than two years but stopped wearing it.

**Situation 3:** I stopped wearing the hijab 1 year ago.

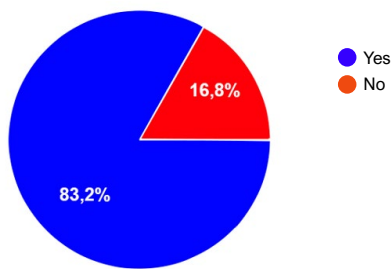
### If so, how often do you wear them? (more than one option can be selected)

263 answers



### Have you ever experienced some type of embarrassment due to the religion?

291 answers



As previously mentioned, **65.5% of the women** who answered the questionnaire are **reverted Muslims**. Most are recently reverted, with **38.2% having reverted between 1 and 5 years ago**, **22.2% between 5 and 10 years ago**. However, we found a variety of ages: between 18 and 60 years old, but mostly women between 36 and 40 years old (19.7%), 18 and 25 years old (18.6%) who answered the survey. As these are recently reverted women, it is worth reflecting on the mechanisms of defense and acceptance that they receive during this period from the community itself **and whether they have ways of preparing to face the rejection of their religious choice**.

We highlight that 63.6% are of European origin, followed by African and Arab. Most of them live in the Southeast region, with 24% having completed high school, **25.9% having completed higher education** and **19.7% having graduate degrees**. The salary range of 1 to 3 minimum wages corresponds to 33.7% of the total, with **26.4% indicating that they are unemployed**.

**Married women with children make up 37%**, with **27% not being married but having children**, while **24.2% are not married and have no children**.

The highest rate in the survey shows that 91.9% are Sunnis.



Regarding the relationship with the family, 41.9% pointed out difficulties, indicating that more than 50% of the relatives and 38% of the friends see the reversion in a negative way.

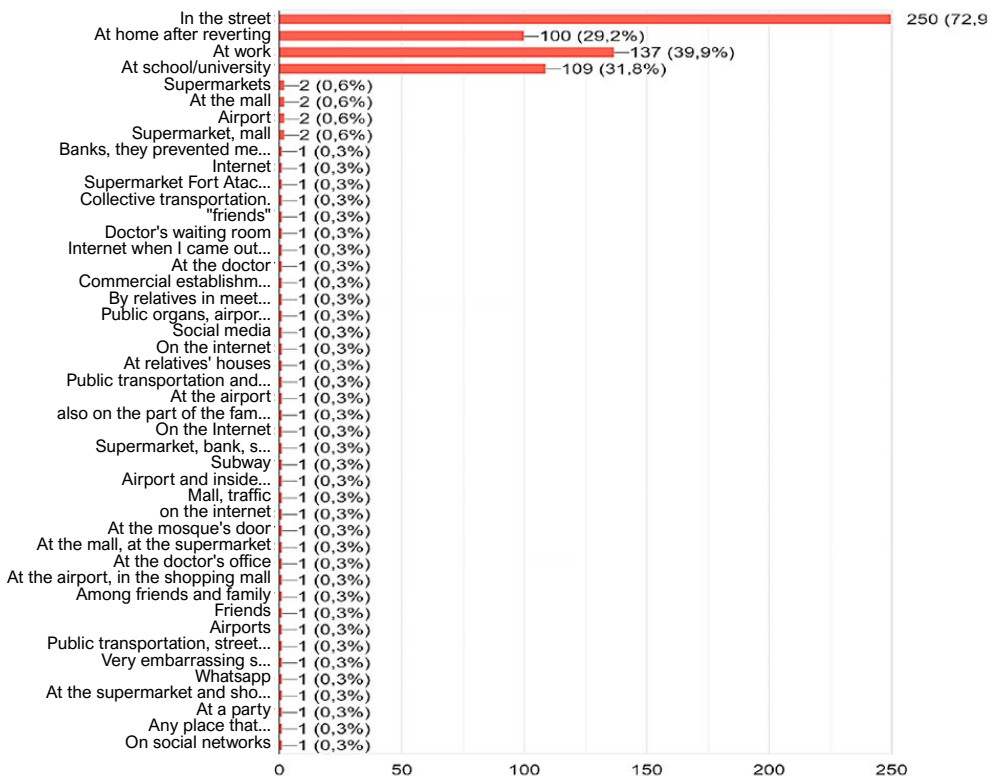
About the hijab, 72% say they wear it, but only **68.4% indicated that they use it every day.**

Religious embarrassment is reported by 83.2% of the participants

## 2.3 Muslim women who suffered Islamophobia

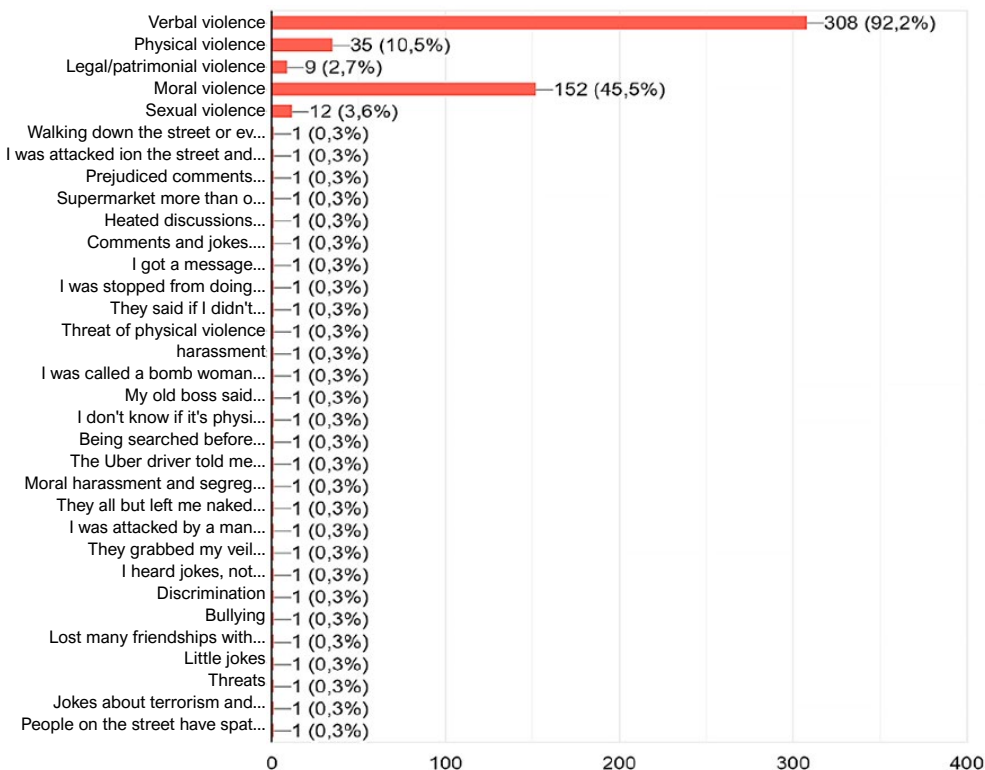
**If so, in which environments did this situation of embarrassment happen? (More than one option can be selected)**

**343 answers**



## Type of violence suffered: (More than one option can be selected)

334 answers



Based on the data, it is possible to confirm that the public space (street) is the place with the highest incidence of violence against Muslim women. 72% of these acts of violence happen on the street, followed by work (39.9%), university (31.8%) and home (29%). **Verbal violence stands out with 92.2%**, followed by **moral (45.5%)** and **physical (10.5%)**.

When we asked if the respondents would like to talk more about their experience as Muslim women (both born and reverted), we received reports of experiences that can be framed in the following topics: I) *Implicit/disguised aggression*: where mainly covert aggressions are found, such as jokes and questions about the religion, invalidating it; II) *Verbal aggression*: involving offense and insults against Muslims; III) *Threats and physical aggression*: in which people reported being attacked, in public places, due to the religion; IV) *Sexual harassment*: in which women report having been fetishized by using a scarf (hijab), for example; V) *Aggression related to the use of the veil*: where violence related to Muslim women's clothing is reported,

many of which occur in public spaces; VI) *Aggression by the family*: which deals with the experiences of Muslim women within the family, with reports mainly of reverted women stating that, in many cases, their relatives do not accept their reversion; VII) *Aggression in the work environment and/or academic environment*: in which women report violence experienced in these environments, which are of different types; VIII) *Xenophobia*: in which Muslim women were treated as foreigners, even those born in Brazil; and IX) *Experiences in the religion*: in which women talk in general about how they feel being Muslim in a country like Brazil.

Violence suffered verbally and/or implicitly prevails, these being the most striking categories in the women's reports, with verbal violence also appearing in other categories, such as at work and/or in the academic environment. Among the implicit aggressions, which appear mainly in the form of mockery or "jokes", the ones that are most repeated are those that relate the Muslim person to a terrorist, making references to explosion sounds and "suicide bombers". Also striking is the violence related to the use of Islamic clothing, such as the hijab. Many women reported not being able to use it due to prejudice, being physically abused because of it or being punished for using it, such as not getting a job/being fired, for example.

In the experience of reverted Muslim women, there is also an increase in violence suffered within the family nucleus, in which relatives do not accept or do not take the reversion to Islam seriously, which can make the experience even more painful, because in addition to the aggressions suffered outside the home, they are still not accepted within their own family.

The women's reports sometimes portray the violence suffered, in one way or another, due to religion. The categories and the statements from the women are presented below. It should be noted, however, that the categorization of experiences is an attempt to make the presentation of data collected in the research more didactic, since many of these narratives demonstrate the interrelationship and complexity of the phenomena we approach. In this way, it is possible to perceive that many of the experiences are transversal to the categories, being able to fit in more than one.

## IMPLICIT/DISGUISED AGGRESSION

**Situation 1:** Criticism/insults in the form of "jokes"/ disapproving looks/exclusion from family life.

**Situation 2:** Some people in the store have already touched or pulled my turban and jokes like 'boom' (explosion sound).

**Situation 3:** Comments on the type of clothing, for wearing long clothes in the heat, for example.

**Situation 4:** When I entered the supermarket, I was ignored by the cashier who instead of assisting me closed the cashier, and the two attendants kept talking to each other until it reopened and they did not greet me and, after attending me, threw the change on the counter. More than once in the same *Fort Atacadista* supermarket.

**Situation 5:** In a ride app, the driver questioned my religion saying he was educated and that everything was ridiculous.

**Situation 6:** People look at me as if I were from another planet, some are uncomfortable next to me and bothered by my veil.

**Situation 7:** I posted something on Instagram Stories (learning to read in Arabic) and friends asked if I was going crazy, what was my problem, that I didn't believe in Jesus, that I would become a terrorist. My ex-boyfriend wrote me saying that I was going to become a terrorist and blow up places, that I was being brainwashed. Even though I act very calmly and without radicalism. I'll need to go back to Brazil and I'll stay there for a year (I'll be back in 2022) and I don't feel ready to wear a hijab for good. I know I'm wrong but I ask Allah to make my path easier as I have to work and I raise my autistic son alone (my ex-husband abandoned him financially and intellectually) and wearing the hijab is still complicated in my work.

**Situation 8:** It was nothing serious, just "jokes" about being a suicide bomber or if I know the head of al Qaeda (This was the most uncomfortable one, because an old man approached me in the supermarket, insisted a lot that I talk about this organization and if I liked them, I still don't know what he intended by that...).

**Situation 9:** I am always linked with "bomb"; "terrorism"; "submission"; "dowry hunting"; "incapacity of choices and opinions" etc.

**Situation 10:** I have been confronted by a Catholic colleague wanting to discuss pillars of faith and accusing me of denying the "holy Trinity". He did this in a loud voice and calling other men for me to answer about stoning adulterous women according to Shariah.

**Situation 12:** As a rule, women are very curious about the hijab, and normally associate the garment with a “marriage with an Arab” and not with an authentic and autonomous practice of faith.

## VERBAL AGGRESSION

**Situation 1:** I've been cursed at school for being the daughter of Arabs and Muslim.

**Situação 2:** I'm Muslim, I suffer a lot for being the only one in my city... Because people judge me every day, they curse me in alhamdulillah for everything because of my religion.

**Situation 3:** I was a child and a classmate questioned whether my father would “go out and blow everyone up”, and a philosophy professor implied that the belief encouraged female mutilation.

**Situation 4:** Outro professor na escola que eu trabalho me desmoralizou como feminista e mulher independente por ser muçulmana, debochou das minhas origens e me chamou de mulher bomba, na frente dos meus alunos.

**Situation 5:** When getting on the bus the driver shouted telling me not to explode everyone was looking at me.

## THREATS AND PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

**Situation 1:** When crossing the street, people accelerated their cars to run over.

**Situation 2:** I was assaulted by a woman with a bible who hit me on the head.

**Situation 3:** The definition of all the facts affected was the physical aggression I suffered by an elderly woman who, at the beginning of the verbal aggression, wanted to make a joke and I didn't like it and said that I didn't feel at ease, as the aggressor didn't like my answer, she started screaming and in the end she slapped me on the back with all her might saying “go back to your country”, I thought I think I need to go back to São Paulo because I'm from São Paulo first and foremost and from Brazil second!

**Situation 4:** I have lost job vacancies for wearing the hijab, and I remember that once the manager who was responsible for the stores where I worked made

my boss ask me to remove the hijab to work. About the physical aggression, another sister and I were leaving the mosque and a man passed by me, and when he passed, he pulled my niqab, hurt my eyes and face, at that moment there was no policeman nearby, so I ended up giving up on filing a report.

**Situation 4:** They threw insecticide in my eyes, and I have to wear glasses, it affected my vision.

**Situation 5:** The most striking violence in question was almost a physical assault in a store, the person in question said that “people of my religion are a risk to humanity”, that I killed over there and fled here. She tried to attack me but was restrained. But teasing is constant on the street.

**Situation 6:** I was physically assaulted on my way back from Masjid El Nur. I was in Leblon with a non-Muslim friend, and we were going to her daughter’s house and a man came towards me and kneed me in the leg... I almost fell and when I turned around, he closed his hand to punch me , but the street security guard came quickly, and he ran away.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Situation 1:** At my job, a man I didn’t know made sexual proposals to me saying that it was a “fetish” for him.

**Situation 2:** Once a man put his hand on my breast while I was walking down Avenida Paulista. It was a day of general strike. The curious thing is that I was with friends who were wearing sleeveless blouses and breasts much more exposed than mine, but it was on me that the harasser’s hands came.

## AGGRESSION RELATED TO THE USE OF THE VEIL

**Situation 1:** Once I was with friends in a square and some boys were making fun of me from afar shouting “boom” and “it’s going to explode” and everyone knew it was for me until I felt very irritated and I went to question them and they took my hijab away. I managed to put it back on because my friends chased after it. I locked myself in the bathroom.

**Situation 2:** Once I was leaving the dentist, inside the elevator with my mother, who also wore a hijab at the time, we were verbally attacked, and nobody

defended us. I had my hijab pulled in college when I studied Law, I held it with a chin strap, when they pulled it, the strap opened and hurt my neck.

**Situation 3:** When I'm not in Brazil I wear the hijab and abaya because I feel safe out there, but when I'm here, because I've suffered attacks before, I don't wear it to keep myself safe and protected, I can't wear the hijab here for fear of being attacked again.

**Situation 4:** The worst experience was the public embarrassment during a certification exam at Banco do Brasil where I work, in front of colleagues who remained silent! I was threatened by the inspector that I would have the test annulled for not taking off the hijab! Then, the University of Brasilia gave the direction to take it back, but without apologizing, but the damage had already been done.

**Situation 5:** I worked at a company where the manager's wife, when visiting the place, said: why don't you tell her to get that off her head?!

**Situation 6:** At work, my boss said he was dismissing me because my hijab was bothering and embarrassing the customers, on the streets I was the subject of offensive words. It is very sad to be Brazilian and feel like a foreigner in my own country.

**Situation 7:** I took a civil service exam, and they called me to a reserved room where I had to show my hair to a woman, they said I had to do it to make sure I wouldn't cheat on the test... That I could have the answers hidden under the "cloth".

## AGGRESSION BY THE FAMILY

**Situation 1:** Some relatives, when they found out, said "you are going to belong to the terrorists' religion" and I explained that terrorism has nothing to do with the Islamic religion. They understood, but they just think that I reverted to Islam because I admire the religion and that I'm not really a Muslim, just because when I was born my parents baptized me in the Catholic church, but I have nothing against the Catholic religion, I just always felt that there was something missing in me, in my heart, and when I saw news of attacks and in books I thought, a religion is not like that, a religion is love and peace, this is wrong. I went deeper into research and found several Muslim sisters and

brothers who talk about religion, and I asked Sheikh Jihad, he helped me a lot, explaining on Instagram, and I did my reversion with him on Instagram. Since then, my relatives think that I only admire the religion, that my concession was a joke.

**Situation 2:** At home my mother makes jokes in bad taste with me and my husband, she even said that Allah has not yet fulfilled my desire to be a mother because I was in the wrong religion, that if I started to attend hers that would be resolved.

**Situation 3:** My parents and relatives in general (uncles and cousins) who don't have knowledge and don't even want me to explain, judge me as submissive to men, follower of a culture that is not mine etc.

**Situation 4:** My mother talks badly about me when I wear a hijab, in addition to talking badly about the religion.

## AGGRESSION IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND/OR ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

**Situation 1:** I was a receptionist in a set of rooms, in a new condominium, the accountant, very nice and fake, came to ask about my religion and clothing and then told my boss that it was not good for me to work at the reception, because it caused a bad impression on his customers. I was fired.

**Situation 2:** I am still not wearing [Islamic/Arabic clothing] because I am afraid of losing my job.

**Situation 3:** At my job I am not allowed to wear a hijab. I feel extremely embarrassed. I was also informed by HR that this (Islam) is not the company's culture.

**Situation 4:** As for the university (public and therefore secular), I was not allowed to pray with the excuse that if someone who does not like Muslims attacked me during prayer, the university could not be held responsible. I was scared by this possibility and didn't perform the prayers at the right time.

**Situation 5:** I couldn't get a job because I couldn't wear a hijab.

**Situation 6:** In a master's selection panel, one of the professors looked at me with a face of disgust. When the results came out, I found out that she pulled



the interview grade to lower my grade and thus prevent my entry into the program.

## XENOPHOBIA

**Situation 1:** I was on the bus. It was crowded, a guy came in and started yelling saying I had to go back to my country. He started yelling “Get the Saudi off the bus” and started using profanity. People defended me. And in Rio Grande do Sul, I was seen strangely, a girl changed places in the train once because I sat next to her.

**Situation 2:** Once I was about to enter the station when I felt something behind me, a man managed to pass with me inside the turnstile to avoid paying, I looked at him and already started talking back, wanting to scream, and he said that I could not report him, since his country (I'm Brazilian) welcomed me, and he had no money to pay for the subway ticket. I shouted anyway to the inspectors and security, the man ran away, they followed, and I continued on my way.

**Situation 3:** Once there was a crash between our car and that of another couple, while we were discussing how it was going to be resolved, the woman walked around our car and saw that we had a Quran hanging, she immediately told her husband to stop arguing with us, that we were Arabs, and that we were going to blow them up, on top of that, when we were speaking Arabic in front of them on the phone, she said that we couldn't speak another language in her country, and if we wanted to speak our language we should go to our country.

## EXPERIENCES IN THE RELIGION

**Situation 1:** I am confident in my decision to revert, at the beginning it was very hard, because I was raised in the gospel, and my whole family is Christian. But I love Allah first, I feel happy, I'm not in Islam because of anyone, I wasn't forced, I just fell in love with the form and the doctrine.

**Situation 2:** It's been almost 16 years since I reverted. I found my path of peace in my heart. At first it was very difficult because, to avoid arguments with my mother and the glares of other family members, I was like a stowaway - locking myself in my room to pray, sneaking out to eat before sunrise in Ramadan... and even now I don't have the courage to wear the hijab on the street or at work.

I'm afraid, insecure. I live in a small town, and I believe I'm the only Muslim around here. Many people know me because I am a kindergarten teacher. Few people know that I am Muslim.

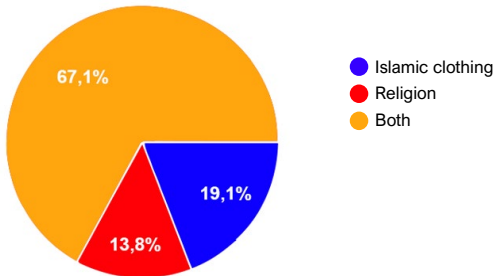
**Situation 3:** It's embarrassing, they look at Muslim women and judge, the poor things, wives of terrorists, should go back to their country, they don't even know that in fact many are Brazilians born in Brazil, many do not have Arab descent.

**Situation 4:** Being referred to as a suicide bomber has basically become normalized because it happens so often. Being questioned as an invader in my own country, or questioned, especially by women, about the oppression and imposition of the hijab by men, is also very frequent - it is as if the clothing that covers the body was a sexist demand accepted without criticism by the Muslim woman.

**Situation 5:** When I imagined myself in a situation of violence (more verbal) I always imagined myself fighting back, explaining that I wasn't a terrorist or anything like that, but on the two occasions I suffered verbal violence I froze, I had no reaction, except for my eyes full of tears.

**Situation 6:** I got on that bus that took the passengers to the plane and 3 Brazilians (who had no idea that I was Brazilian) started laughing and making jokes, calling me a suicide bomber and that I would blow up the plane. I also couldn't get a job at a Globo station in Mato Grosso because of the hijab (I was supposed to work on the radio, not on TV), and here in South Africa a tour operator wanted me to act as a guide for Brazilians but without my headscarf and I refused. I always noticed the looks of curiosity and astonishment in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso or anywhere else in Brazil. The last time I went to Brazil I wore more caps than a hijab or a burqa.

**Do you consider that the violence suffered is related to:  
340 answers**



When participants were asked if they felt that their rights were violated, most of them agreed. The participants mainly report the limitation of freedom of expression, religious freedom, difficulties in exercising the right to come and go, free will (right to choose). There is a predominance of complains regarding when they wear the hijab, the right to exercise their profession and to be legitimized as Muslims, since people discredit their beliefs or disrespect them. In addition, there were also comments from women who claimed that they had not experienced situations in which they felt that their rights had been violated; however, in these cases, a portion of the respondents pointed out that they had not “yet” experienced such contexts, demonstrating that they know that these situations often happen to people in the community, so that they may still suffer violation of their rights. The participants also commented on the feelings involved in the situations experienced and on the supposed secularism of the Brazilian State.

Below are examples of the participants’ speeches.

## VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

**Situation 1:** Yes, I feel because I have free will of choices. My right to wear the hijab and practice my profession has been violated.

**Situation 2:** Yes, the right to freedom to practice Islam (prayers)/ right to freedom to wear Islamic dress/ right to come and go.

**Situation 3:** Right to follow my religion and traditions in peace.

**Situation 4:** Definitely yes. My constitutional right to believe or not to believe, freedom to express my belief. Persecution for religious positions.

**Situation 5:** Of religious freedom, of expression, of being able to occupy places by my ability and having been boycotted due to the religion I follow.

**Situation 6:** Yes, freedom. I should be able to dress however I want.

**Situation 7:** Yes, my right to free choice, my right to express myself, my right to have my religion without being attacked.

**Situation 8:** Having my own choices. They even started to question my marriage (which was not the reason for the reversion), I met my husband at the mosque after reverting.

**Situation 9:** Of course. I already lost my job because of people's prejudice. I was kicked out of the house due to the family's intolerance and ignorance. Today Alhamdulillah everything is fine, today I am my own person.

**Situation 10:** Regarding the limitation of rights experienced.

**Situation 11:** Entering a public office, I am chased by guards.

## NO VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

**Situation 1:** I don't care what they say.

**Situation 2:** No, because I haven't been prevented from doing anything yet. But I believe that if one day I start wearing Islamic clothes it will be a big problem.

**Situation 3:** It was not so serious from my point of view because I asked the person not to come to my house anymore.

**Situation 4:** It didn't reach this level because I'm a "tough" person, which discourages any comments or attitudes. But I believe that if I wore the clothing, specifically the hijab on a daily basis, in many environments that I frequent due to work and the new degree I am studying, this violation would certainly have already materialized... unfortunately.

**Situation 5:** Not yet, but it's like I have because my right to come and go is somewhat restricted when I know I'm going to face looks and judgments.

## FEELINGS WHEN FACING VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

**Situation 1:** I felt disrespected, violated, it messed with my faith. It wasn't my fault, but the feelings were horrible.

**Situation 2:** I no longer take the bus and I don't leave the house alone. I'm afraid, people are cruel.

**Situation 3:** I feel that my freedom and my right to choose have been violated and therefore I feel disrespected. (It's not everyone who treats me like that, but the vast majority).

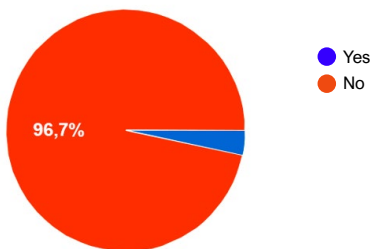
## COMMENTS ABOUT BRAZILIAN SECULARISM

**Situation 1:** Yes! With regard to religious freedom, because we live in a secular country.

**Situation 2:** I think our country is secular, the right to choose is ours, unfortunately there are people who discriminate against our religion because of the media.

**Situation 3:** It's like I always say, we think we live in a democratic country, but we don't, because sometimes we don't have choices in our own country out of fear, and that's the reality of many reverted Muslims. For example, when I go out fully dressed to go to the mosque, they look at me judging, especially when you say you're Muslim, I was already taken out of a place because I was wearing a veil, that feeling of not being or feeling safe in your own country, but I say alhamdulillah to everything, we must, as our prophet did.

### Did you file a police report to register the instance of violence that occurred? 335 answers



Although most of the Muslim women who participated in this study, both born and reverted, reported having suffered Islamophobia in different contexts, only a small portion of respondents reported having filed a police report to record the violence experienced, as shown in the graph above.

The women were asked whether they felt able to report and pursue legal proceedings in cases where they felt their rights had been violated. Most answered

no, justifying it with different reasons. Among them, there are mainly the fear of suffering reprisals, of being fired, of being exposed too much, fear of it “leading nowhere” and also the lack of confidence in the Brazilian justice, claiming that the cost involved in the process would be much higher than possible gains. The women claim that the process is very long and laborious, which is one of the reasons why they do not report the violence suffered.

Some people answered the question affirmatively, raising the possibility of reporting cases of violence against rights. However, no situation of registering the complaint was reported, although situations of restriction of rights have been reported. Some women claimed that at the time the situation happened, they did nothing about it judicially, but that, if it happened again, they could do it. This is in line with what we see in criminology statistics on how people in Brazil behave in relation to the justice system, police and reporting, especially in relation to women. In the cases we are now considering, we believe that the empowerment work currently seen with women, for example the use of the #metoo hashtag, the work of an organization like *Justiceiras* ([justiceiras.org.br](http://justiceiras.org.br)) etc., is not reaching Muslim women.

Below are some examples of responses to this questionnaire topic.

## PEOPLE WHO REPORTED OR WOULD REPORT THE VIOLENCE SUFFERED

**Situation 1:** It was at the beginning when I wore my hijab. It’s been over 4 years now. I don’t know if it would be viable now.

**Situation 2:** The issue was resolved by the college administration and that has been a while and I don’t even remember the girl’s name anymore.

**Situation 3:** Yes, I feel capable of reporting.

**Situation 4:** I decided that if it happens again YES I will file a police report.

**Situation 5:** I am not bothered by people’s ignorance to this extent, I believe that I have not yet had reasons to do so, but if I do, I will not fail to report and pursue my rights.

**Situation 6:** Yes, today if there is something worse than name calling, for example if astagfirullah, someone attacks me, of course I will report it.

**Situation 7:** I would definitely report it and follow up with legal proceedings, but unfortunately I didn’t even think about filing a report on those occasions.

**Situation 8:** Yes, I feel able to report it, unfortunately I feel that we have no legal support, the Islamic community in Brazil is very silent in this regard, when we go to the authorities to report it, we are mistreated once again, for being women and Muslims, this is really disheartening.

## PEOPLE WHO DID NOT REPORT OR WOULD NOT REPORT THE VIOLENCE SUFFERED

**Situation 1:** In my case, I don't think it's necessary, but I believe I wouldn't have the emotional strength to pursue legal proceedings if necessary.

**Situation 2:** No, because it was on the street, I don't know the person, I didn't argue, I just felt bad about the situation. I'm very quiet and my city doesn't have a mosque. For those who do not know the religion, it is also difficult.

**Situation 3:** I feel capable, but as it is a time-consuming process and without any result, I ended up not doing it.

**Situation 4:** I didn't want to report it because I didn't want problems with these people.

**Situation 5:** No, I don't want to expose myself and wear myself out. I don't believe in justice for these cases.

**Situation 6: I can't.** It's no use denouncing it, they (justice/police) will treat us with contempt and humiliate us even more.

**Situation 7:** Unable to report it, as I would lose my job.

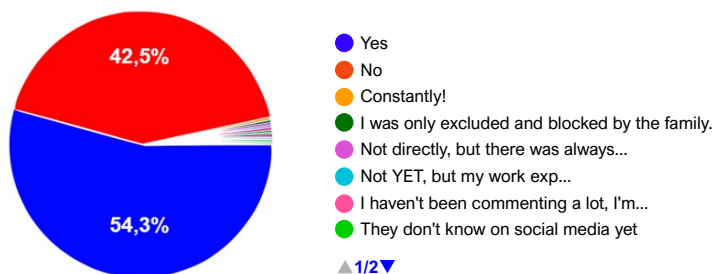
**Situation 8:** No, because it happened in my work environment and among relatives. I need to work and get on with my life. Although, I think that only after a judicial process the individual may learn.

**Situation 9:** I have suffered a lot of verbal abuse at the beginning of my conversion from family members, but I couldn't report them.

**Situation 10:** I can't. I have my college to pay, my bills and I'm afraid I won't be able to get a job anymore with a lawsuit on my name.

## Have you ever been the target of prejudice in social media for being Muslim?

341 answers



Women were also asked if they had already been targets of Islamophobic attacks on social networks. **54.3% of female respondents said yes**, while 42.5% claimed not to have suffered prejudice on social networks, as shown in the graph.

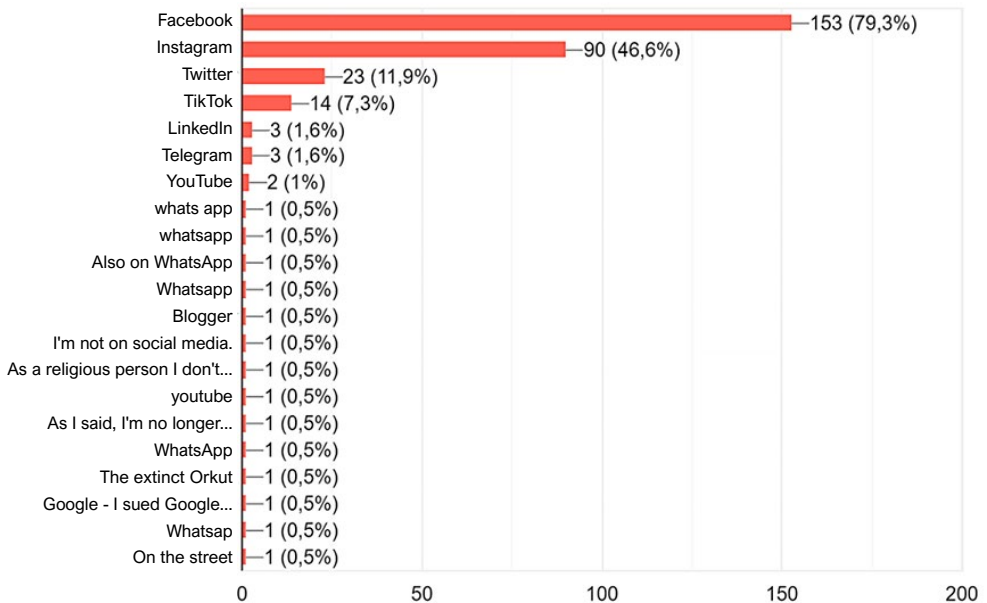
Some comments that were made by the respondents regarding this question are that they had never been directly targeted by online attacks, but that they notice the existence of prejudiced comments in posts by large profiles in these networks that address the Arab/Islamic world, for example. In addition, some of the women claimed that they did not use social networks much and, therefore, had never experienced anything in the virtual environment. Such lack of frequency may be due to this prior perception of possible aggressions, which is consistent with the observation that Islamophobia shapes the way Muslims live and participate in civil society and its public spaces.

Regarding the networks in which attacks occur most, Facebook predominates (79.3%), followed by Instagram (46.6%), Twitter (11.9%) and Tik Tok (7.3%), these being also the most common social networks. The data is presented in the following table.



## If so, in which social networks did this happen? (More than one option can be selected)

193 answers



Some of the participants were willing to describe Islamophobic situations they experienced on social networks. Among the main points reported are discrediting the religion, referring to it as something “bad”, and referring to Muslims as “the antichrist”; situations in which Muslim people are placed in positions of inferiority and in which they suffer xenophobia, like in the contexts previously mentioned, but this time in the online environment. One participant mentions that Muslims also have the right to have social networks, but in the case of people from the community, they are invaded by violent comments every day, linking their religious belief to terrorism, mainly. Thus, it is inferred that before publishing content on social networks, people consider, in some way, the impacts that their publication may have: Muslim women probably add to such considerations the fear of being attacked for their intimate profession of faith, which should be allowed to be expressed in any space, without suffering violence.

The participants state that usually people of the evangelical religion are those who most utter attacks against Muslims: the participant points out that “it is usually people of a specific religious denomination (Evangelicals) who cause attacks, persecute. I reported some of these attacks to the Federal Police, but I never heard back”; another one says that there are usually people “asking to take off the hijab, sending

messages in the chat like 'Jesus is the only savior' or [saying] that I was going to hell for following 'that'".

Cases have also been reported in which, after posting photos on their social networks wearing Islamic clothing, mainly the hijab, the women experienced some kind of embarrassment, ranging from "after a post reporting my conversion, I received an inbox message from a stranger saying 'go back to your country, we don't like Muslims here'" to "an audio of a friend saying 'why do I wear that old cloth on my head now?"". Some people still report having their religion delegitimized, as if they were not really adepts of Islam, as can be seen in the following report: "[I get] many messages from people close to me, mocking, defaming the religion and even telling me that I wanted to 'get attention for being Brazilian and wanting to dress up as an Arab, without knowing anything about a religion that only wages war'".

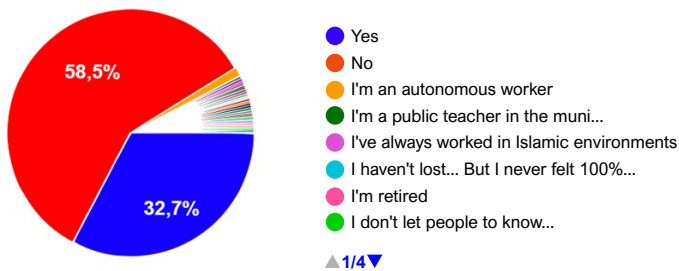
In addition to the offenses uttered directly against people in the Islamic community, there are also experiences of prejudice in relation to the religion that are more open and not so targeted. In this sense, one participant said that "looking for religious themes, I have constantly come across absurdly lying videos, which reflect the religion as being one of extremely violent followers, even indoors, such as pedophiles who marry virgin children, attack when do not have their wishes met and force their wives to humiliation and even kill them when they do not obey". This report makes us think about the need for content that communicates more accurate information about the religion, disseminating true information about Islam. In several moments of the research, the respondents attributed the violence suffered to people's lack of knowledge about the religion, often based on stereotypes and fallacious information. In this way, we also point out the need for a work of dissemination about the religion to be carried out so that people can get actually learn about it, breaking with media stereotypes. It should be noted, however, that the work is not easy, as the negative image of Islam has been disseminated for decades.

Another point that draws attention in the women's reports is when the prejudice experienced virtually goes beyond the limits of the online environment, causing consequences for their personal lives, as illustrated by the statement: "I am a teacher, and the mothers of my students discovered my religion through my social networks. Since that day I became the 'worst' teacher for the children. I was put through so much psychological pressure, making me really believe that I was the problem, that I

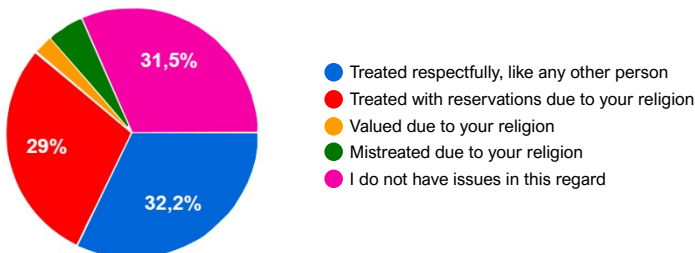
resigned”. In this example, the teacher was clearly damaged by the Islamophobia she experienced to the point of quitting her job.

Other aspects to be highlighted about the experience of Muslim women on social networks is the attack directed at the person and the religion when there is some point of disagreement. According to one of the participants, “Muslims cannot take a stand because if someone disagrees with us, the first thing they attack is our religion, and us for being Muslims”. Such a statement makes us think about how the person born or reverted to Islam is reduced to the simple expression of their religious belief, being limited to that and not being offered the right to show themselves as a whole human being, but only as a part of their culture, which, on top of everything, is oppressed on a daily basis in different spaces. Some people avoid thinking about it, putting it aside, as noted in “I prefer to delete the comments and move on with my life”. “It’s easier on my mental health.” That is, in addition to having her existence simplified, the repetition of violent and oppressive acts against them still put them in a position of such helplessness that there is no longer any strength to take a stand against it, making it better to just try to keep going forward, seeking to avoid suffering.

**Have you ever lost your job or an opportunity/promotion due to the religion?**  
330 answers



**In your relationship with coworkers, due to being Muslim, you are:**  
317 answers



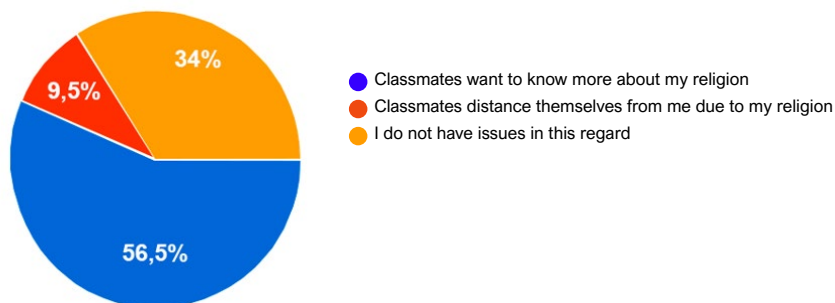
### In your school or university environment:

293 answers



### Still regarding your school or university environment:

294 answers



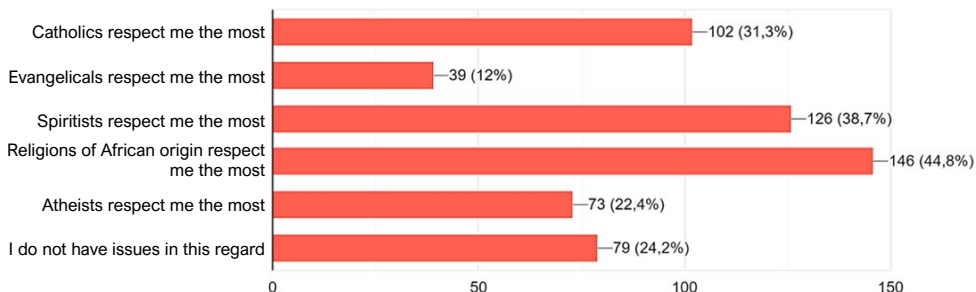
### In your opinion, people you interact with but that are from other religions:

333 answers



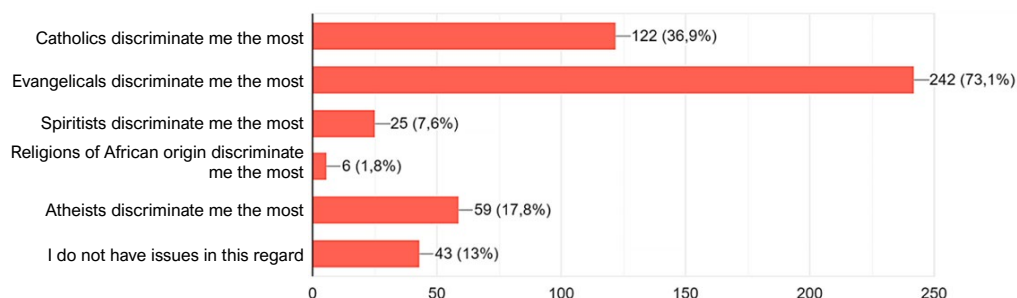
**People of which religion different than yours respect you the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

326 answers



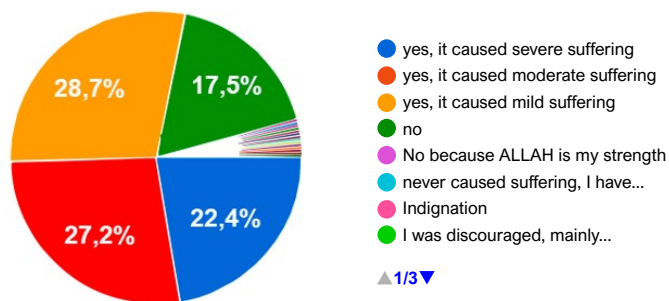
**People of which religion different than yours discriminate you the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

331 answers



**Having experienced an instance of violence against your religion, did this situation cause any level of suffering?**

326 answers

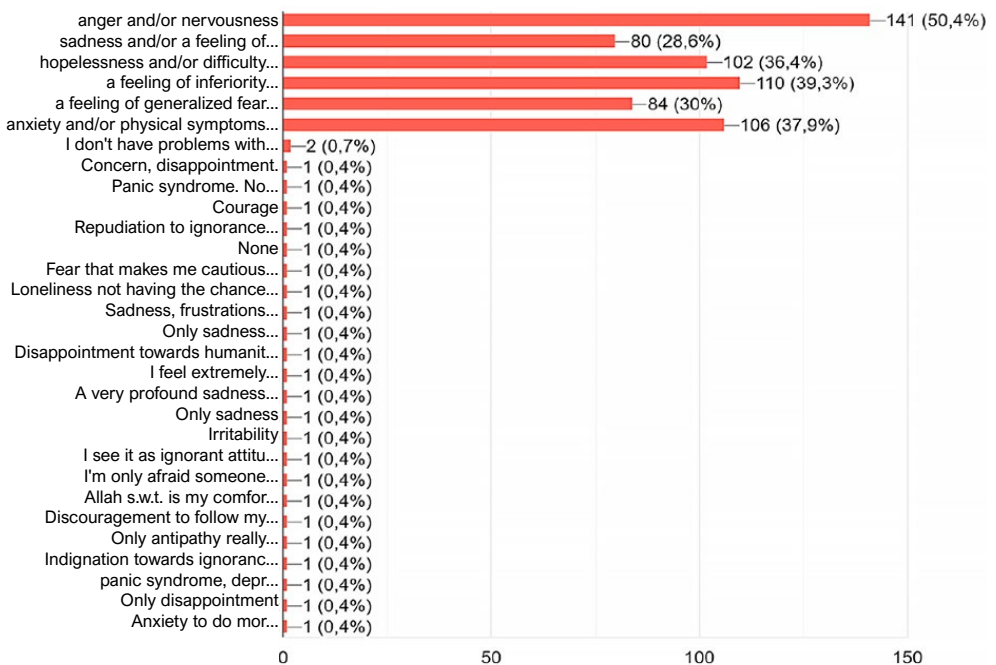


Regarding the repercussions of situations of violence in the lives of Muslims, feelings were reported in this order: **anger, nervousness, inferiority, anxiety, lack of motivation, discouragement, sadness**, generalized fear and feelings of loneliness. Some people report a lack of desire to return to the environment in which the violence

was experienced, such as at work, for example. A single participant commented that she did not care about the attack she had suffered, as she “was at peace with the religion”. However, most participants reported having suffered emotionally from the attacks, whether severe, moderate or mild. Most episodes of violence occurred in public space and in the family space.

**If you answered yes to the previous question, what feelings are related to this suffering? (More than one option can be selected)**

**280 answers**



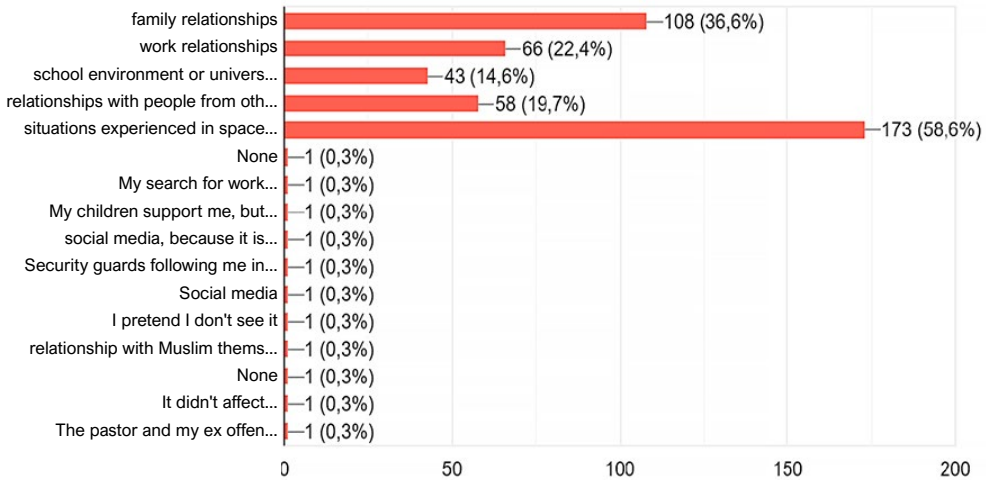
Although they report experiencing various symptoms after the events of violation of rights and prejudice, among these physical and emotional symptoms, the vast majority of women (75.1%) reported not having sought help from a mental health professional. Some women reported having already suffered religious discrimination in health services, and others claimed that they believed that professionals would not be able to help them. Some people mentioned that they already frequented a therapist before the event, but that they do not necessarily address religion in the consultations with the professionals

For the next questions:

1 - Strongly agree  
5 - Strongly disagree

**What situations seem to have affected your mental health the most? (More than one option can be selected)**

295 answers



**After the situation experienced, did you seek any professional mental health service?**

317 answers



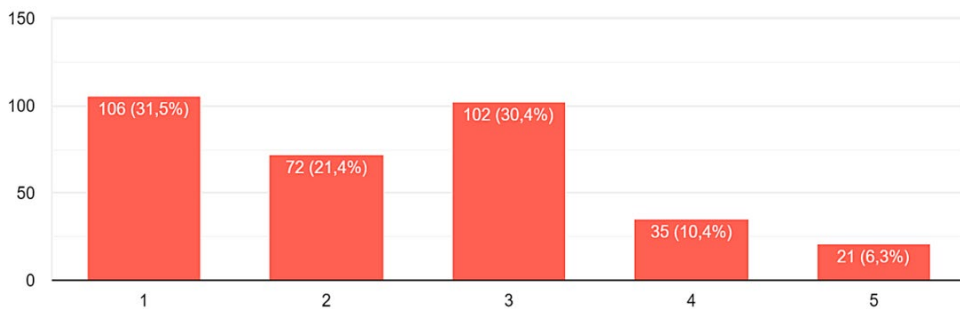
For the next questions:

1 - Strongly agree

5 - Strongly disagree

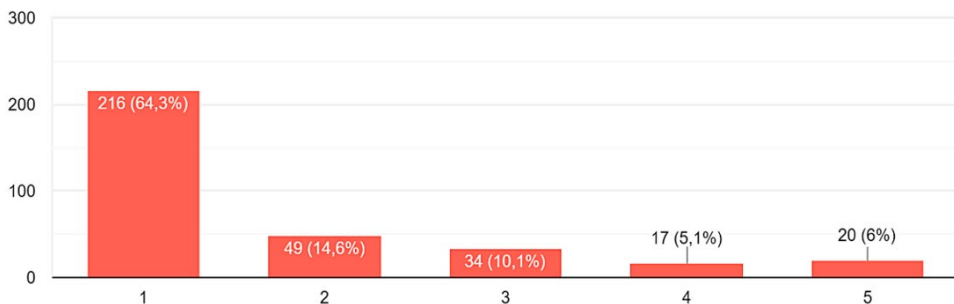
**Most Brazilians are afraid of Muslims.**

336 answers



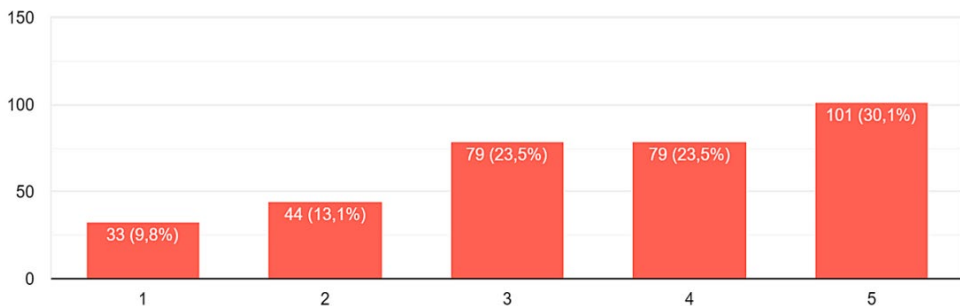
**Islam is represented negatively in Brazilian media.**

336 answers



**Generally speaking, few Brazilians are afraid of Islam and Muslims.**

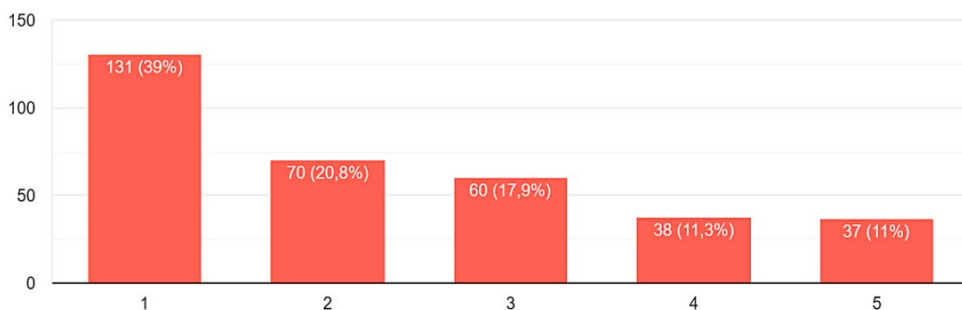
336 answers





## Most Brazilians perceive Islam as a threat to their culture.

336 answers



Using numbers 1 to 5, women mostly categorized the statement that Brazilians are afraid of Muslims using numbers 1 and 3 (31.5% and 30%), **the media being the space in which Muslims and Islam are poorly portrayed, pointed out by more than 64% (1)**. When it is mentioned that few Brazilians are afraid of Muslims and Islam, the women point to the number 5, attributing a very low value to this item. Finally, they point to 1 when referring to the possible threat to culture by Islam.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The quantitative data indicate that most respondents, both men and women, consider that the Islamophobic episode(s) they faced caused them some level of psychological distress. However, the distribution of answers deserves attention: taken separately, the category most answered by men was that the episode of violence did not cause suffering (34.6%) – only when we add up the three categories related to suffering (mild/moderate/severe) is that we reach an expressive number. Among them, one of the respondents understands that “facing this situation [Islamophobic episode] is part of the jihad [effort] to become a better person”; also noteworthy is the understanding that Islamophobia results from misinformation fed by the mainstream media, and should be treated not in the micro, but in the macro-social dimension. Among women, the categories related to suffering were more frequently answered (78.2% when adding the categories of mild suffering, moderate suffering and severe suffering): only 17.6% answered emphatically that the Islamophobic episode they experienced did not cause any level of suffering.

It is known that religious people in general, and Muslims in particular, tend to be reluctant to seek psychological care (Koenig & Al Shohaib, 2017). As expected, although suffering is predominant among both men and women, it did not generate

a significant search for professional care: 82.1% of Muslim men did not seek this psychological and/or psychiatric resource; among women, the rate drops to 75.1%, but even so, there is a striking discrepancy between the percentages of those who reported suffering caused by the Islamophobic episode and the little demand for formal mental health network.

Such mismatch is usually explained by some factors, such as the strong stigmas created and crystallized around mental health, not only by religious people, but by society as a whole. It is also common for Muslims to feel fearful of the mental health professional because they assume that their religious affiliation will not be respected and their conceptions of health and illness will not be recognized.

Among the comments made by Muslim men to this question (After the situation experienced, did you seek any professional mental health care?), one respondent pointed to the search for emotional shelter within the religious community itself – in the face of the suffering experienced, he sought to alleviate it by talking to “more experienced Muslim brothers”; moreover, the income variable was also used to explain the difficulty that many people have in accessing these services and/or continuing care over time – one of the respondents mentioned that he was unable to continue psychotherapy due to unemployment.

When deepening the analysis on the open answers given by Muslim women to this same question, on the one hand, the dissatisfaction and/or mistrust nurtured by them in relation to mental health professionals, seen as little capable of helping them, is highlighted: “the subject of religion was never addressed”, “none of them will solve anything, much less help me, I’ve been to several psychologists”, “I didn’t think it was necessary because I knew how to handle what happened”. However, on the other hand, many commented that the suffering resulting from discrimination and/or violence was not the trigger for seeking mental health services not because they avoided the service, but because they already attended a psychologist/psychiatrist for other reasons, prior to experiencing an episode of Islamophobia – “I already undergo psychiatric and psychological treatment, but because of my bipolar disorder”, “I have been going to therapy for many years, so I am getting help”, and “I already go to therapy, so I did not look for anything else” were some of the comments relevant to this topic.

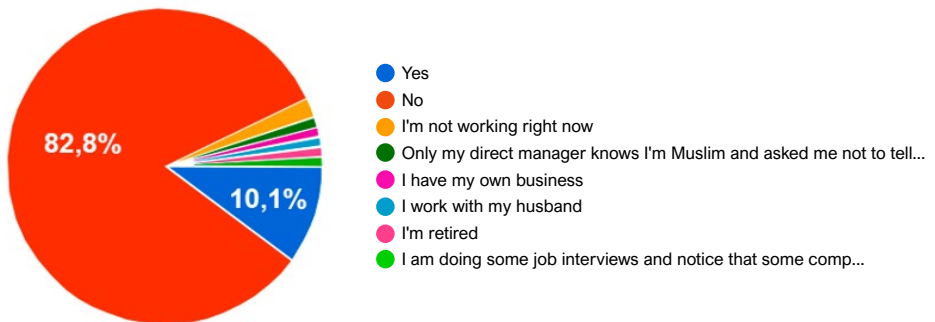
Both Muslim men and Muslim women stated that the suffering came mainly from Islamophobic situations experienced in public spaces (43% for men; 58.6% for women), which is explained by the degree of exposure of the public in relation to the

private and the ease with which many Muslims are recognized in these spaces, due to their clothing and/or other diacritical marks that make their religious belonging to Islam visible. Then, Muslim men and women pointed to family relationships (32.6% for men; 36.6% for women): the hardships that many reverted Muslims live within their nuclei due to the obstacles posed by members who they reject their religious choice are known; and, thirdly, both suggested that their mental health was affected by discrimination experienced at work (25.6% for men and 22.4% for women), an environment in which public exposure is usually added to embarrassments that are potentiated by hierarchical labor relations.

On the affective level, suffering is negatively manifested through various emotions and feelings: both Muslim men and Muslim women respondents stated that “anger and/or nervousness” predominated (74.3% of men; 50.4% of women women). The following were also reported as relevant: discouragement, sadness, feelings of inferiority and anxiety.

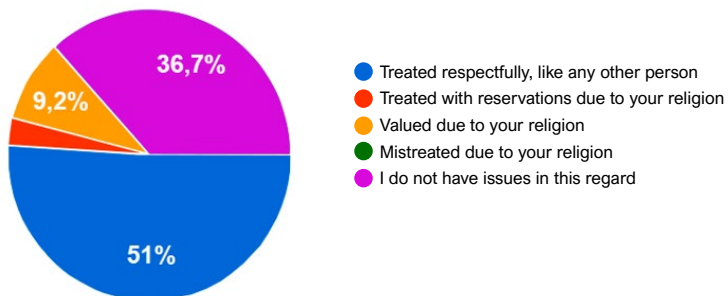
## 2.4 Reverted women who did NOT suffer Islamophobia

**Have you ever lost your job or an opportunity/promotion due to your religion?**  
99 answers



### In your relationship with coworkers, due to being Muslim, you are:

98 answers



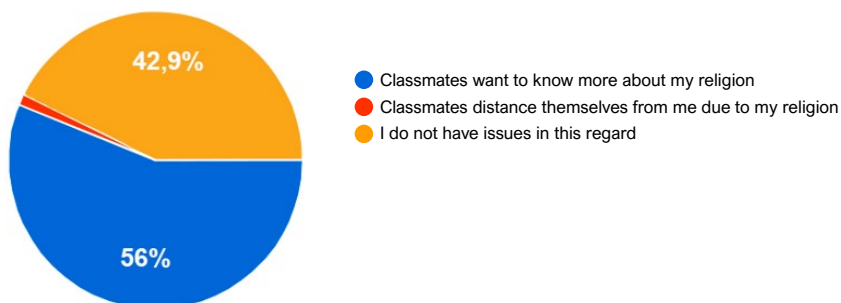
### In your school or university environment:

89 answers



### Still regarding your school or university environment:

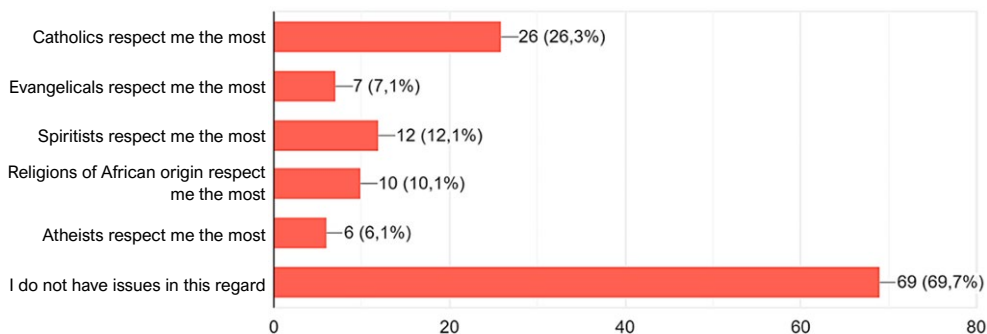
91 answers



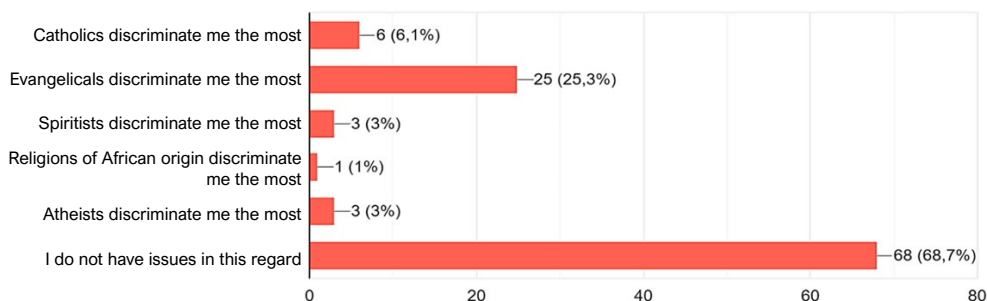
**In your opinion, people you interact with but that are from other religions:  
99 answers**



**People of which religion different than yours respect you the most? (More than one option can be selected)  
99 answers**



**People of which religion different than yours discriminate you the most? (More than one option can be selected)  
99 answers**



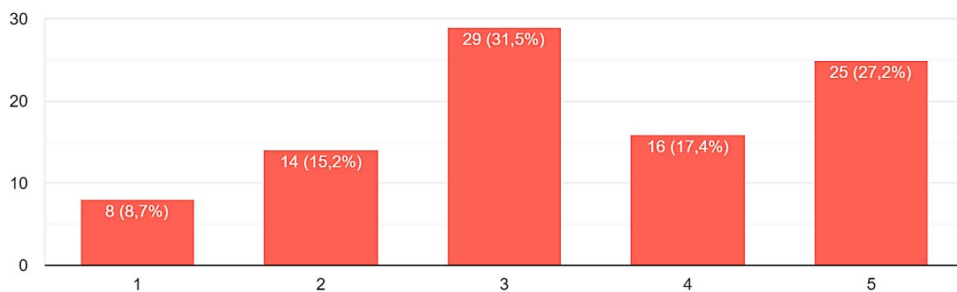
For the next questions:

1 - Strongly agree

5 - Strongly disagree

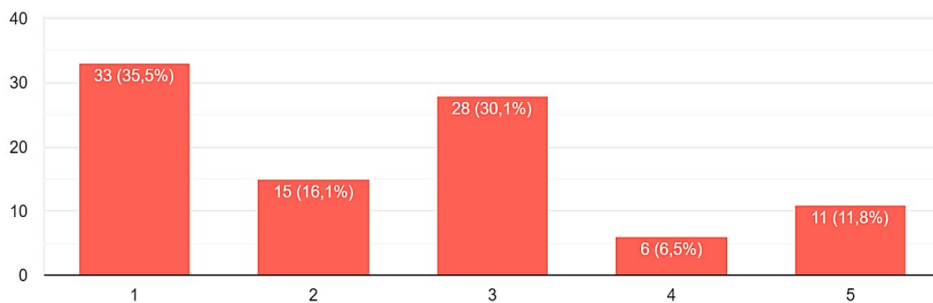
### Most Brazilians are afraid of Muslims.

92 answers



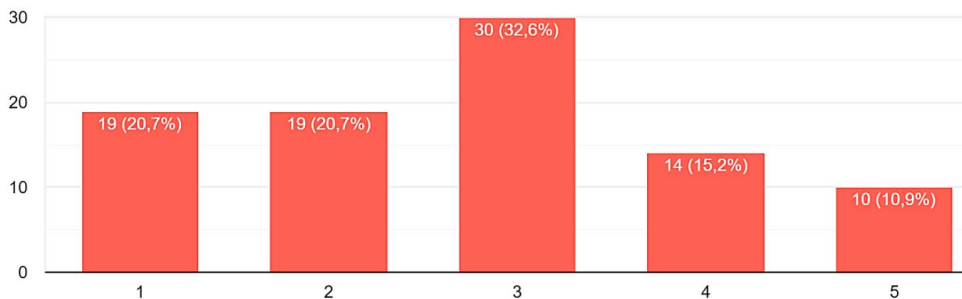
### Islam is represented negatively in Brazilian media.

93 answers



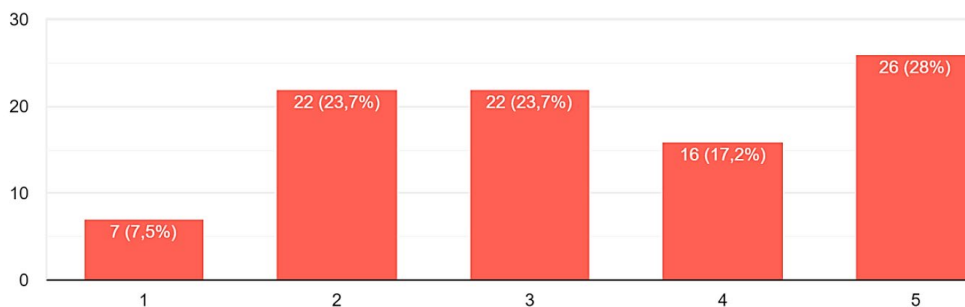
### Generally speaking, few Brazilians are afraid of Islam and Muslims.

92 answers



## Most Brazilians perceive Islam as a threat to their culture.

93 answers



Regarding Muslim women who consider they have not suffered from Islamophobia, more than half feel treated with respect and only 10% have suffered some type of violence. They say that most people want to know more about the religion, but the Evangelical religion is again identified as the religion with the least tolerance for Muslims.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

#### WOMEN WHO DID NOT SUFFER ISLAMOPHOBIA

**Situation 1:** I am Muslim. I've lived in Brazil for 18 years, I've been wearing a hijab since I was 10 years old. If I say that I suffered great prejudice or discrimination I would be lying. Brazilians are very curious, they love to know about my religion, and they respect me a lot for loving my religion and my faith in Allah so much.

**Situation 2:** I think Islam should be more publicized, so that people know the true essence of Islam and not just let erroneous and media information be placed as true.

**Situation 3:** I believe that discrimination depends a lot on our posture as well. Discrimination exists, but it can be minimized according to the behavior you have in society.

**Situation 4:** Actually, I'm Uruguayan and my experience is mostly regarding my country. I never had a problem alhamdulillah, I have always been treated well wherever I went, be it the airport, bus, the mall etc.

**Situation 5:** May the new Muslims have more attention and more support to follow the religion.

**Situation 6:** In the option of the media that refers to Brazil, I refrain from speaking, but about the fear, I think so. It passes for a while, but they just need to see our conduct, our way of speaking that everything changes alhamdulillah.

**Situation 7:** I believe that many Muslim women sometimes exaggerate a little on the issue of prejudice or racism, I am the only Muslim in the state of Uberlândia for 7 years I have been dressed in Sunnah all in black from head to toe khimar down to the knees I have never suffered any prejudice. I lived for 11 years in São Paulo, I never suffered anything in 18 years of Islam. Alhamdulillah. I think it's not all that.

**Situation 8:** I was sad because she's not like that (it was a single episode), she didn't even know that she had offended and disrespected God, his prophets and brothers!

**Situation 9:** Those who respect others will always be respected.

**Situation 10:** So far, I have been very lucky to embrace Islam, as I have not experienced any discriminatory problems, quite the contrary. People look at me with admiration, they adore my clothes.

**Situation 11:** I don't suffer discrimination because I don't wear a hijab to work, and whoever doesn't accept my decision, I distance myself from.

**Situation 12:** The biggest prejudice I perceive is that my speech is not considered as being from a "real" Muslim, because I am reverted. Often in conversations, people who don't know much about it prefer to defend what "the others" say about what happens "there" (they never know exactly who or where) than listen to the facts I expose about the religion, differences between cultures and related topics.

**Situation 13:** I gained other friends through Islam, but practically all my childhood and high school friends abandoned me when I reverted, many pass by me and it seems that they never saw me, this is painful, but I didn't give up.

**Situation 14:** My non-Islamic friends also respect my traditions and admire our traditions.



**Situation 15:** In the city where I live, they think I'm an Arab because I wear a hijab. People are very curious.

**Situation 16:** I think that the media encourages this prejudice (it broadcasts the news of terrorism, but it doesn't say that the religion is against it and that the culprits were arrested, etc...). My aunt commented one day while watching TV: - They still kill in the name of Allah! You can't say anything about this Mohamad without them killing! These crazy people who are praying while full of savings are worthless, they should be expelled.

If **among men** the data appear to be repeated, that is, reinforced, among those who consider they have suffered from Islamophobia, it is linked to **the verbal/moral character**, and there is an indication of a higher incidence of prejudice on the part of Evangelicals than people of other religions. This incidence of greater violence by Evangelicals and Christians reflects historical, political and sociological issues, and there is, in essence, no "Islam vs. Christianity" opposition, but rather historical, economic, sociological and political conditions, therefore, so that there is a climate of dispute between people of these religions.

The fact that 94.5% did not file a police report is not a problem related to Islam or its experience, but it integrates the great problem of access to material justice in Brazil, that is, the bureaucratic excess, inefficiency and natural incapacities of the system and the bad jurisprudential conduct of cases of compensation for moral damages in the country. Recognizing themselves as minorities, experiencing different processes of exclusion and hostility in their own condition as Muslim women, many of the respondents perceive themselves as having no access to available legal resources.

Apart from earning profoundly less than men, women's responses reinforce the general data obtained and resonate with the broader sociological issue of gender pay inequality.

The use of Islamic clothing (hijab, etc.) among women in everyday life is highlighted, with the majority of women who choose to wear it (59.2%) reporting having experienced Islamophobic episodes. Most (66%) have suffered embarrassment due to their religion. Of those who suffered some kind of embarrassment, most are reverted (60.4%). One piece of data that calls our attention is about the difficulties faced by women in their family nucleus after reversion (41.9%).

Among those who suffered episodes of Islamophobia, most experienced them on the street (72.8%), followed by the work environment (40.1%). If the legal

response to the first case would be to file a police report and a lawsuit against the unknown person, which makes access to justice difficult, the second is much more accessible, considering the nature of a labor violation of contracted obligations and the existence of its own specialized judiciary, the Labor Court, for this purpose. Reports of Islamophobia on the street demonstrate how intolerance against Muslims, added to misogyny and machismo, is normalized. The same indications about filing a police report and the access to justice apply to women in reference to the specific paragraph above. Compared to men, the same data are repeated in relation to the religion considered the most discriminating: Evangelicals (73%).

## Suggestions to the Muslim community

Our objective with this report was to present a first record of Islamophobia in Brazil, highlighting some of the problems that Muslim men and women experience. However, we consider it essential to propose some initiatives to be considered by Islamic Institutions. Since we have identified the aforementioned problems, we take the liberty of bringing propositional notes.

Confronting Islamophobia in Brazil permeates several points, and it is not enough to just carry out a survey that contextualizes the violence suffered. The judicialization of Islamophobia does little to produce anything positive if there is no basic work in *education and dissemination of the religion*. Such initiatives, in turn, without encouraging academic research, will not have enough data to inform what and where to intervene. To do so, it is necessary that part of the (Islamic) community becomes aware of the issue, no longer showing denial regarding Islamophobia in Brazil, and that the whole community starts to help in a more proactive way, especially people who go through situations of prejudice.

There must be, in each community, people willing to collaborate with a broader project to serve the Muslim community; for this, financing initiatives becomes fundamental. A **multidisciplinary team** can be called upon to work with the community and seek solutions so that the new generations do not suffer from what we are faced with in these speeches. If violence does not end, at least we will have more people prepared to face it and more people aware that **Islamophobia underlies crimes, such as hate speech and physical violence**, and that it is necessary to **support vulnerable communities**, especially people from (materially) disadvantaged social classes. Below are some topics that we suggest as an urgent agenda in the community and make ourselves available to discuss:

1. **ACADEMIC RESEARCH.** This report is the result of academic research with various funding and voluntary contributions, with the participation of Muslim and non-Muslim researchers, all committed to the theme. However, the dissemination of the research and the support were sparse, even more so if we consider that it is research that will provide an important contribution to the community about the reality that it experiences. It is critical that

research such as this is supported by Muslim institutions and people in all fields. The data collected here were obtained with the participation and promotion of many, but it is necessary to realize that scientific knowledge is essential to interpret reality and plan actions.

2. **EDUCATION.** Research carried out by the GRACIAS member points to the importance of **studying textbooks** that address Islam and Muslims. Systematic work in schools, with the dissemination of lectures that can be prepared for the different grades of the Basic Education cycles, is necessary, as well as investigating how the theme Islam appears in teaching materials and how teachers are trained to approach religion. One has to think about the specificities of approaching Islam for children, adolescents and young people. Investing in books and magazines that have an accessible language for this audience is crucial. It is important to have contact with Muslim educators who work in schools and universities and to partner with these professionals. Offering lectures and courses aimed at undergraduate students from different academic areas and even graduate courses can be ways of educating future professionals before they enter the job market.
3. **MEDIA.** Community communication is a very sensitive axis. Although nowadays influencers have taken over communication and Muslims are present in this segment, we cannot consider that this is enough to face the various media apparatuses. It is not necessarily the community's digital content generators who master the problems the community experiences: when they publish something, they project this community in a specific way, and hence the need to pay attention to such responsibility. Understanding the multiple intersections between Islamophobia and living in Brazil requires more than the skills of posting on social media. **Holding meetings between these people who produce content and scholars from the community and researchers of Islam and Muslim communities, offering courses and training aimed at this audience is a possibility of intervention.** It is also necessary to campaign in city halls, proposing advertising pieces that represent Muslim people in common situations, as citizens that they are, religious identity being an aspect that does not exhaust the person's other belongings.
4. **LEGAL ATTENTION.** Knowing the rights of Muslims in a non-Islamic country is a learning process that can be done through Islamic education and

media, but when it comes to judicializing it, it is necessary to adequately guide the Muslim population and provide support and guidance. Anyone who goes through an act of violence cannot, without support, file a police report and proceed with legal issues. It must be considered that **the processes are onerous for a peripheral and completely racialized Islamic population**, which is the population of the peripheries, mostly reverted Muslims. Preparing guidance materials for employers, schools, universities, prisons and families about the rights of Muslim people can mitigate problems and favor understanding of the other, demonstrating that the person is supported by an institution – like many religious groups.

5. **PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE.** Brazil is currently living in a scenario full of tensions that has been aggravating manifestations of intolerance against minority/non-hegemonic religiosities: the perception of many respondents about the aggravation of the frequency and intensity of discrimination that they experience in their daily lives is in tune with the sociopolitical reality that presents itself. More than a suffering experienced and perceived individually, the respondents seem to suggest that the suffering resulting from Islamophobia is communal, socially shared: even though part of the respondents believe that the Islamophobic episode(s) experienced did not generate any form of suffering for them as individuals, there is a recognition that Islamophobia affects the community as a whole, potentially generating illness in different spheres. In this sense, we need to encourage the search for psychological help, facilitating contact with psychologists, including having a support fund for psychological help. **It should not be assumed that all Muslims could afford the legal and psychological costs:** often they cannot. Therefore, they are a vulnerable part of society due to social and economic issues and due to this broad context of normalization of symbolic and physical violence against practitioners of Islam.
6. **INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE.** This becomes necessary, as the research identified practitioners of other religions as perpetrators of attacks, such as followers of the Evangelical religion. Fostering dialogue and exposure to Islam, recognizing the non-Muslim other as an interlocutor, can be one of the alternatives to reduce episodes of prejudice. Creating joint projects, aiming at social development and recognizing the Brazilian plurality, is one of the ways in which Muslim men and women are represented side

by side with those who follow Islam. We are aware of some initiatives in this field, but it is important that Muslim people publicize them, in order to include more people in this dialogue, and that they pay attention to the fact that Muslim women need to be present, because the vision that people have is of non-participation of women in Islam; if women are not present, this view becomes reinforced.

7. **INTRA-ISLAMIC DIALOGUE.** Since respondents indicated disagreements due to religious orientation (Sunnis and their branches, Shiites in relation to Sunnis), it is necessary to invest in order for Muslims to understand each other, despite their differences. Disagreeing with a person does not remove one from Islam. As much as one does not agree with some other perspective, legally all Muslims have the right to practice Islam. Learning from differences and building together, despite disagreements, is a perspective that not only tends to unite the community, but also offers an example of peaceful coexistence. Another difficulty pointed out is between reverted and born Muslims. It is necessary to work to promote a community that respects and supports each other, regardless of nationality.
8. **PROTECTION OF MOSQUES.** The suggestion is that each Islamic institution, Beneficent Society, Mosque, Madrassa, Mussala, Hussainiya, Zawiya, etc., has a protection plan. Such a suggestion takes into account episodes such as the Christchurch Attack, in New Zealand, in which members of the local Muslim community were brutally murdered. Having people responsible for security and studying the possibilities of protecting the space and, above all, the faithful is a concern that should always be paid attention to by the various leaders.
9. **GUIDELINES FOR REACTING.** When a Muslim woman or man goes through an episode of Islamophobia, they often do not know how to react, not filing a police report, which can be generated online, and needing to discover how to respond to possible aggressions of the most diverse levels – from discrimination at work to bullying in an educational institution, from discriminatory treatment on public transport to harassment in virtual environments. Drawing up precise guidelines on how to act, offering guidance to victims in the form of a guide allows for more agile responses, in addition to educating community members in advance of possible occurrences, whether to react or to provide guidance.

**10. POLITICAL LOBBY.** We are aware that a well-done political lobby, instrumentalized with scientific research, can change the scenario of the Muslim community. Politics is one of the doors for insertion and projection of public actors, and if Muslims are not present, the very existence of their problems is not even recognized. It is fundamental to build agendas with governments and, in this way, include the problems experienced by the community in the agendas. Ideally, there would be support for the candidacy of people who embrace community causes, who are sensitive to the class, race and gender problems that permeate it.

It should be noted that some preliminary efforts were made in 2015, in the formulation of Bill 979 (Deputy Wadson Ribeiro), which “Criminalizes discrimination for the use of religious clothing or vestments”, in response to what happened to a Muslim law student who, when taking the examination by the Brazilian Bar Association, was banned for wearing a hijab, which was considered to be a headgear object. A mobilization started with a Muslim, Sayid Marcos Tenório, who worked with Deputy Wadson Ribeiro, from PCdoB Party, and, together with professor Francirosy C. Barbosa, wrote and organized a booklet on religious vestments and other religions, which had the participation of anthropologists – Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, Maria Lucia Montes, in addition to Professor Francirosy.

In 2017, given the growth of Islamophobia, FAMBRAS – Federation of Muslim Associations of Brazil asked Professor Francirosy to invite people to prepare another bill in the opposite direction (now from the community to Congress), to which other Muslims were invited to participate: Sayid Marcos Tenório, Felipe de Freitas Souza and Christyane Castellucci Fermino. Bill 8816/2017, which “Provides for the punishment of crimes of intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and violence against freedom and free exercise of belief”. The project was presented on October 17th by deputies Assis Melo (PCdoB/RS) and Goulart (PSD/SP) and had the expected outcome, having been attached to the set of projects that are being processed together with Bill No. 6418/2003, which “Defines crimes resulting from discrimination and prejudice based on race, color, ethnicity, religion or origin”. The Bill includes in the Brazilian legal system the crime of discrimination in the labor market, injury resulting from prejudice, propagation of racism, attack against ethnic, religious or regional identity and criminal association, making them non-bailable and imprescriptible crimes. Repeals Law No. 7,716 from 1989.

It is important to highlight that in 2017 we had already experienced a coup in our country with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, and there was not enough political lobby from the Muslim community to promote the project, despite the efforts of FAMBRAS and the people who contributed to the writing of the Bill.

**11. MUSLIM WOMEN.** Propose initiatives aimed at Muslim women, especially reverted ones, and support women's collectives that seek to base themselves on collective work, whether for their survival or to keep themselves away from aggressors. We understand, therefore, that the creation of a support network is essential. In the absence of psychological and psychiatric care, which is not available to the community, it is necessary to build these networks and foment them – including financially. Another initiative is to seek partnerships with psychology faculties that can serve the community free of charge.



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