

COUNTER-JIHAD MOVEMENT (CJM)

IMPACT: The self-described “Counter-Jihad Movement” (CJM) is a network of European and North American anti-Muslim movements, institutions, political parties, authors, bloggers, and activists who claim that ‘Western civilization’ is “under attack” by Islam. While CJM is an informal network, participants in the movement have used the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)’s annual Human Dimension and Implementation Meeting (HDIM) to disseminate its anti-Muslim ideology in European and North American policy circles annually since 2007. Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik cited numerous CJM members as inspiration for his 2011 deadly attacks in 2011.

- The self-described “Counter-Jihad Movement” (CJM) is named for the “counter-jihad” conferences they have organized since 2007 with stated aims of **“resist[ing] the increasing Islamisation of their countries.”** CJM’s motto is: **“Our unity in mission arises from a common goal: to resist the [sic] Jihad in all its forms.”**
- **CJM was launched in the years following 9/11 to “initiate action against the encroachment of sharia in Western Society,”** according to a post published on the anti-Muslim blog *Gates of Vienna* by “a group of people...who have firsthand knowledge of the history of the transatlantic Counterjihad.” The blog’s comment section provided early network-building for would-be participants in the movement.
- In 2006, individuals associated with the movement in the United Kingdom and the United States first established an organization called the Center for Vigilant Freedom (CVF). CVF became the International Civil Liberties Alliance and expanded to include content in Spanish, Dutch, Italian, and German. According to a *Gates of Vienna* post on CJM’s history, the “paramount goal of the Counterjihad is to reverse the encroachment of sharia (Islamic law) in the Western democracies. [...] **Because Islam is a unified system embracing religion, political ideology, and jurisprudence, preventing the establishment of sharia also serves to prevent the Islamization of countries with a substantial Muslim minority.”**
- **CJM held their first transatlantic counter-jihad meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark in April 2007.** Invitations to the event were sent from Norwegian blogger and anti-Muslim political activist Fjordman, Stop the Islamisation of Denmark (SIAD) founder Anders Gravers Perdersen, and American *Gates of Vienna* and *Brussels Journal* editor Edward S. May, who goes by the pen name Baron Bodissey. **The movement has been particularly active on the Internet, where Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik came across their inflammatory writing on anti-Muslim online journals, news-hubs, and blogs.** Breivik was especially impressed by Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller, Andrew Bostom, Bruce Bawer, Serge Trifkovic, and Baron Bodissey from the US, and Geert Wilders, Bat Ye’or, and Fjordman from Europe—all affiliated with CJM.
- **The second counter-jihad conference took place in Brussels, Belgium in October 2007. Keynote speakers included British author Bat Ye’or and US writer and head of several anti-Muslim organizations Robert Spencer, who presented via video.** Bat Ye’or—the pen name of Gisèle Littman—is the author of the book Eurabia: The Euro - Arab Axis and is credited with coining the term and accompanying conspiracy theory of “Eurabia.” According to Littman, “Eurabia” describes the Muslim “plot” to “develop good relations with Europe in order to separate Europe from America, weaken the West, encourage Arab Muslim immigration into Europe, organize a militant Islamic community in Europe, and develop a strong European Islam with political and intellectual influence on European development.”
- Other participants in the 2007 CJM conference included Austrian Elizabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, a central figure in the transnational anti-Muslim network; Filip Dewinter, leader of the Belgian far-right political party Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest); Stefan Herre, founder of the largest German anti-Muslim blog PI-News; and Ted Ekeroth, politician in the Sweden Democrats party (*Sverigedemokraterna*) politician. Other far-right participants included the Norwegian Jens Anfindsen, the Swiss Arnaud Dotezac, and the British Gerard Batten.

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- According to the organizers of the October 2007 counter-jihad conference, **“Over 70 organizations and individuals joined together in the European and Flemish Parliaments to create a European network of activists from 14 nations to resist the increasing Islamisation of their countries.”** So-called “anti-Islamisation experts” from fourteen, mainly western European countries presented reports on the current “state of Islamisation and jihadism” in their nations.
- Since its first gatherings in 2007, counter-jihad conferences have been organized across Europe, including in Vienna (May 2008), Copenhagen (May 2009), Zurich (June 2010), and London (September 2011). In addition to these stand-alone gatherings, CJM organized a counter-jihad presence at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) July 2009 “Human Dimension Roundtable” in Vienna.
- **In September–October 2009, CJM organized its annual conference in Warsaw, Poland to coincide with OSCE’s annual Human Dimension and Implementation Meeting (HDIM), Europe’s largest human rights conference, to maximize participation of policymakers.** Notable anti-Muslim participants at this meeting included Jean-Michel Clément (ICLA Chairman and founder of L’Alliance or Alliance to Stop Sharia), Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, Stephen Coughlin (a senior fellow at Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy), and Baron Bodissey.
- **Since late 2014, while ICLA and other participant CJM organizations have become increasingly inactive, they have continued to participate in the annual OSCE conferences.** These have become one of the most important venues for the transatlantic CJM to legitimize their anti-Muslim ideology within government policy networks. **At OSCE gatherings, CJM affiliates such as ACT for America, ICLA, the Wiener Akademikerbund, and Pax Europa have organized side-events and regularly intervene with remarks during the official plenary**—primarily reserved for OSCE’s member countries. These actions included **speaking out against the term Islamophobia**, which ICLA has described as a “violation of logic,” and recommended be “immediately abandon[ed]”; **forming a working group “to propose measures against...Sharia,”** among other recommendations singling out the rights of Muslims; and **mobilizing against Muslims’ religious freedom and in support of CJM members’ freedom of speech to call the prophet of Islam a pedophile.**
- HOPE Not Hate, a British anti-racist and anti-fascist advocacy organization, lists nine international CJM organizations that have appeared repeatedly at CJM-organized events: International Center for Western Values (ICWV), European Freedom Initiative (EFI), International Freedom Alliance (IFA), International Civil Liberties Alliance (ICLA), International Free Press Society (IFPS), Stop Islamization of Nations (SION), Faith Freedom International (FFI), Knights Templar International (KTI), and American Freedom Alliance (AFA). Most of these organizations exclusively focus on issues related to Islam, through criticizing the religion or mobilizing against the rights of Muslims. **Well known US anti-Muslim activists such as Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, Brigitte Gabriel, Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, and Ibn Warraq have also participated in CJM-affiliated events.**
- **CJM has not only sought influence in European and North American policy circles, the network has also incited anti-Muslim violence in Europe.** *Gates of Vienna* founder Baron Bodissey has voiced his support for “counter-jihadist” blogger Peder Nøstvold Jensen, otherwise known as Fjordman. Jensen’s anti-Muslim blogs were the main inspiration for Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who in July 2011 killed seventy-seven people, mostly youths, to stop what he claimed was the ‘Islamization of Europe.’ **Bodissey stated in September 2006 that, “We agree with Fjordman and many others that the Jihad is just a symptom, and that the enemy lies within. This war is a civil war within the west, between traditional western culture and the forces of politically correct multicultural Marxism that have bedevilled it for the last hundred years.”** In February 2007, Bodissey wrote, “Islamophobia is a rational response to current events. If you’re not an Islamophobe, you’re not paying attention.”