

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The terrorist attack in the United States on September 11, 2001 (9/11) undertaken by Islamic extremists named Al-Qaeda and was led by Osama Bin Laden brought anger to all American citizens. The extremist had hijacked four commercial airplanes and crashed twin towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC). The attack caused a lot of deaths and injured people. Therefore, this tragedy had risen up a negative stigma called Islamophobia that brought a more challenging life to the Muslim Americans

Islamophobia is a fear and hatred that produces discrimination and oppression done by the Anti-Muslim group. It has existed for a long time and the statement created firstly by Alphonse Étienne and Sliman ben Ibrahim that was written down in their biography in 1918, they called the stigma in French as *Islamophobie*.¹ Occasionally, Islamophobia also recognized as a form of racism. This negative stigma created a blunder understanding of Muslim identity, culture, and history.

However, the tension of Islamophobia was not only caused by the 9/11 terrorist attack but also occurred after President Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 United States election. According to the Washington Post, Trump is an

¹ DINET Alphonse Étienne, and Muhammad . La Vie De Mohammed, prophète D'Allah. Pl. XVI. Paris, 1937.

anti-Muslim bigotry who liked to spread hatred by making some tweets or retweeting on his personal Twitter to show that Muslims are mostly terrorist. In January 2017, he made decision where he banned Muslim and prohibited seven Muslim countries visited the US for 90 days and suspended refugees, specifically, Syrian refugees to come to the US for 120 days.² In supporting his decision, Georgia lawmakers declared Muslim women who wear the hijab would be punished.³ It was written under the anti-masking law that one of the regulations was prohibited women to wear headwear or hijab while driving on public roads.⁴ Because of both the decision and the Georgia law, the issues such discriminations, physical violence, and even damage mosques caused by the rise of Islamophobia causing many Muslim Americans victims within the state.

The issues caused by Islamophobia is a part of international issue that mostly occurred in Western countries and not only in the United States, but also European countries, and a few countries especially India and New Zealand that currently experiencing the tension. Unfortunately, those international issues have not threatened the international security. So, it is the reason why most of the countries have not considered Islamophobia as the urgent issues and even in the US, some of the governments, especially republicans, have not considered them as the urgent issues. In contrast, these issues considered as the urgent issues and

² Timeline of the Muslim Ban.” ACLU of Washington, February 10, 2020. <https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban>.

³ Feliks Garcia New York @feliksjose. “US State Bill Could Make Hijabs and Niqabs Illegal in Public.” The Independent. Independent Digital News and Media, November 17, 2016. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/georgia-hijab-niqab-ban-illegal-bill-islam-muslims-law-a7423441.html>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

are currently tackling by Intergovernmental Organization (IGO), International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO), or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), like United Nations. As an international organization that has a responsibility in many international issues, the UN puts Islamophobia as an important issue that should be tackled. Thus, this organization held a conference or seminar to examine it. For example, In 2004, United Nation has Seminar on “*Confronting Islamophobia: Education for Tolerance and Understanding*”, the seminar discussed how they could re-establish the trust among people from different faiths and cultures, bridge the gap between the West and Islam, and the most significant was debating the role of media in fostering Islamophobia.⁵

Furthermore, one of the US NGO that puts Islamophobia as its main concern is Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the largest non-profit Muslim Americans organization established in 1994. The presence of CAIR aims to represent Muslim voices in America and to ensure Muslim Americans to involve in political and social activism. This organization has specific divisions, including Islamophobia Watch, to monitor and expose if some individuals or organizations promote anti-Muslim bias.⁶ In focusing on any Muslim Americans issues, particularly Islamophobia, CAIR has established its chapter around America. Furthermore, CAIR has many programs such as internship programs, annual youth leadership programs, and an annual CAIR

⁵ United Nations. Secretary-General. "Seminar Participants Stress Importance Of Tolerance, Understanding, Education In Countering Islamophobia." News release, December 07, 2004. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2004/hr4801.doc.htm>.

⁶ CAIR. "CAIR at a Glance." CAIR. Accessed October 01, 2020. https://www.cair.com/about_cair/cair-at-a-glance/.

banquet to assist Muslim Americans who experienced hate-crimes or discrimination. CAIR also has its civil rights department counsels to protect and defend their rights.⁷ Reported by CAIR, Islamophobia attacked more against Muslim women than men. This was proven by the report that stated around 279 or 13% shown that headscarf or hijab as the triggers of Anti-Muslim bias incidents.⁸ Furthermore, in the 2019 report by the Institute for Social Policy and Understand (ISPU) partnered with Muslim Student Association (MSA) in California, 61% of women students with hijab were discriminated more than men.⁹

During the last 75th anniversary of the United Nations 2020, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan, warned UN General Assembly to declare an "*International Day to Combat Islamophobia*", since the issue was rising all over again to spread religious hatred and worsened global tensions.

Since the issues of Islamophobia are ups and downs, this is important to NGOs or civil society to uphold Islamophobia and help Muslim Americans from hate crimes. Accordingly, this research will deeply explore the contribution of CAIR in eradicating Islamophobia in the United States.

1.2 Research Question

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ ISPU, and MSA. *2019 Survey of MSA West Student Members: Perseverance in the Face of Adversity*. Report. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU). California, USA, 2019. pp. 5.

Based on the information above, I suggest the following research questions, including:

1. What are CAIR's programs in eradicating Islamophobia in the United States?
 - a. How do CAIR's programs contribute in eradicating Islamophobia in the United States?

1.3 Research Objective

The action of discrimination for Muslim Americans all around the world, including in the United States, is still occurring. Muslims are one of the groups who often being discriminated against in the country. Especially, the one who shows their identity or symbol as a Muslim through their appearance, such as hijab and having a beard. Even though this issue is still occurring in the US, people do not put their trust on the government because most of the US government support the Islamophobia.

Therefore, the objectives of this research are to reveal CAIR's programs in eradicating Islamophobia within the state and to report the contribution of CAIR's programs in tackling the Islamophobia. This research will come along with some pieces of evidence of what CAIR has done to assist Muslim Americans from hate crimes and discrimination.

1.4 Significance of Research

The result of this research will show the effectiveness of CAIR as an NGO in the United States in eradicating Islamophobia and assisting Muslim Americans to have a normal life and be safe in the United States because a lot of people have not known that hate crime against Muslim Americans is still up and down. Specifically, when it comes to Muslim Americans. Therefore, I will prove that NGO like CAIR have important role in international relation where the organization has given their best to protect Muslim Americans and has tried to bring more peace toward American citizens, both Muslim and Non-Muslim.

1.5 Structure of Writing

The first chapter, which is introduction, talks about the background of the thesis topic, research question that the research will address, the purpose of the research and the significance of the research.

The second chapter, theoretical Frameworks, talks about the literature review, the International Relations theory and concepts that used as framework to analyze the contribution of CAIR in eradicating Islamophobia in the US. It complies several studies on the concept of human rights, NGO, and Islamophobia that is integral in understanding this research.

The third chapter, which is Methodology, explains the research approach, research method, data collection technique, and data analysis technique used in gathering data and information for the research.

The fourth chapter, Analysis, is the peak of the thesis and analysis. This chapter analyses and presents all the data gathered regarding the contribution of

CAIR in eradicating Islamophobia in the US in a systematic manner according to international relations theories and concept used. The result can be used to address the research question of the thesis.

The fifth chapter, Conclusion and recommendation, summarizes the analysis chapter. The chapter will point out recommendations for future studies and comparison to analyze the contribution of CAIR in eradicating Islamophobia in the current or future administration.

