

GALLUP | *The Coexist Foundation*
Muslim West Facts Project
What the People Really Think

Muslims in the UK, France and Germany feel more loyalty toward the country they live in than the general publics realise.

There is a gulf of difference in the importance of religion in everyday lives; faith is most important in Asia and Africa – least in Europe.

A groundbreaking new report published today by Gallup and the Coexist Foundation shows that European Muslims in the United Kingdom, France and Germany feel more loyalty toward the country in which they live than the general public believes they do.

The report, *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations*, is the first annual report on the state of faith relations in countries around the world. It also shows that European Muslims are striving to be more involved, with 96% of German Muslims saying that mastering the national language is necessary for integration, 87% of French Muslims saying finding a job is important, and 84% of British Muslims expressing the need to celebrate national holidays.

The Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies Dalia Mogahed says there needs to be a renewed debate about the views of the majority of Muslims. Ms Mogahed, who was recently appointed to President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, highlighted how the report had broken down many of the myths about Muslim attitudes.

"This research shows that many of the assumptions about Muslims and integration are wide of the mark. European Muslims want to be part of the wider community and contribute even more to society."

Global research of religious tolerance conducted by Gallup demonstrates a clear gulf among countries surveyed on their views of religion's importance in their everyday lives; 13 of the top 27 countries polled are in Asia and Africa; the bottom six countries are all in Europe.

The importance of religion in people's daily lives was numerically highest in Bangladesh at 99%. The lowest response was 20% in Norway. Outside Asia and Africa, Brazilians showed the highest response (88%); among the European countries surveyed, Italians came in on top with 72%.

In the US, 33% of the public is classified as integrated, in Canada 31%, and in the UK only 20%. "This can be explained by the historical importance of immigration in the development of Canada and the United States as modern nations," explained Ms Mogahed.

Of the European populations surveyed, the Dutch and French are most open to having a neighbour of different faith, the Dutch and Norwegians are among the most likely to agree they always treat people of other faiths with respect.

In Africa, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Africa had the highest proportion of integrated respondents. Sierra Leone's response may seem surprising given that civil war raged for more than a decade, but

GALLUP | *The Coexist Foundation*
Muslim West Facts Project
What the People Really Think

explained Ms Mogahed, “this conflict was fought more over economics than religion.” Niger, Chad and Djibouti are the most isolated publics in the region. Mauritania is overwhelmingly Muslim, but many in Mauritania believe most faiths enrich society.

Ms Mogahed added, “In many cases, national populations in which substantial percentages are considered integrated have governments that actively promote religious tolerance, recognize multiple religious traditions in official holidays and national celebrations, and enshrine religious freedom in the constitution, like in Senegal.”

A high percentage of Afghanistan’s population (84%) is classified as isolated, yet 97% say religion plays an important part in daily life; this suggests that civil strife along ethnic and sectarian lines is not enough to create religious isolation.

Pakistan and India, with different religious compositions, have similar levels of integrated respondents; 22% and 21%, respectively.

In the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which divides Jewish Israelis and Muslim and Christian Palestinians, a high percentage of Israel’s population (71%) can be classified as isolated. Israelis are also the least likely of Asian populations surveyed to say they always treat members of other faiths with respect and the least likely to agree that most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society.

Among Asian populations surveyed, Malaysians are most likely to agree most religions make a positive contribution to society, while Indians are the most likely to agree that they always treat people of other faiths with respect and that people of other religions always treat them with respect.

Other key findings:

- People in Sierra Leone are among the most likely to say they have learnt something from someone of a different faith within the last year.
- Sierra Leoneans are among the most likely to agree that most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society.
- The public in the United States is among the least likely to object to a person of a different faith moving in next door.
- People in Burkina Faso, France, the US and Sierra Leone are among most likely to say they treat people of other religious faiths with respect.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Research

The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies draws its analysis from data collected through the Gallup World Poll, an ongoing research project that surveys residents in more than 140 countries and areas and represents the views of 95% of the world's population.

About Muslim West Facts Project

Muslim West Facts Project is a not-for-profit partnership between Gallup and the Coexist Foundation to disseminate the findings of Gallup's independent research to opinion leaders around the world.

www.muslimwestfacts.com

About the Coexist Foundation

The Coexist Foundation is a charity established in 2006 to promote better understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims - the Abrahamic Faiths - through education, dialogue and research. Through the projects and programmes which we support, we hope to help people of these faiths improve their relations - above all with each other - but also with different faiths, and with those of no faith.

www.coexistfoundation.net

About the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies

The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies is a nonpartisan research center dedicated to providing data-driven analysis, advice and education on the views of Muslim populations around the world. It draws upon Gallup's unprecedented global research initiative, the Gallup World Poll and the Gallup Poll of the Muslim World, to enable global leaders, institutions and the public to make more informed decisions.

For more information please visit www.gallupmuslimstudies.com

Gallup has studied human nature and behavior for more than 70 years. Gallup's reputation for delivering relevant, timely and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel is the cornerstone of the organization. Gallup employs many of the world's leading scientists in management, economics, psychology, and sociology and our consultants assist leaders in identifying and monitoring behavioral economic indicators worldwide. For more information please visit www.gallup.com.