

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

### Muslim Demographics: Nordic Countries & the Netherlands

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- ❖ Islam is the second largest religion in Denmark; 4% of the population is Muslim.<sup>1</sup> Muslims in Denmark live in the larger cities such as Copenhagen. In 2009 Danish law banned outward religious symbols, such as headscarves, turbans, yarmulke, and crucifixes.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ An estimated 6% of the population in Sweden is Muslim. Muslims in Sweden are often subject to harassment and hate-crimes. Due to this the U.S. Embassy works with the Swedish government to promote religious tolerance and counter anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic sentiment.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ In Finland there are approximately 50,000-60,000 Muslims. This is a more than a 100 percent increase since 1999. An estimated 75% of Muslims in Finland are Sunni and 25% Shiite. The largest Muslim group is ethnic Somali; Muslim communities also originate from North Africa, Bosnia, and Iraq.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ There are an estimated 2,000 Muslims living in Norway, or 2.3% of the population.<sup>5</sup> Islam is the second largest minority religion. The first wave of immigrants came in the 1970's from Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ The first mosque in Iceland is set to begin construction in 2014. The mosque will serve as a library, community center, and a prayer room. There are an estimated 2,000 Muslims living in Iceland.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ Only 1% of the population in the Netherlands is Muslim. The majority of Muslims in the country are of Turkish and Moroccan ancestry. Other Muslim communities come from Suriname, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. There are an estimated 12,000 native Dutch Muslims. In 2013 the majority of refugee and asylum seekers to the Netherlands came from Somalia and Syria (both countries with significant Muslim populations) due to conflict in those countries.<sup>8</sup>
- ❖ Islamophobia is prevalent in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. The Dutch Freedom Party and Denmark's Danish People's Party use anti-Islam sentiment and policies as part of their platform. Polls have shown that 34-37 % of Dutch and Danish people have a negative opinion of Muslims.<sup>9</sup> A massacre in Norway carried out by Islamophobe Anders Breivik drew inspiration from American anti-Muslim hatemongers such as Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer and Daniel Pipes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&category=&publisher=USDOS&type=&coi=DNK&rid=&docid=4cf2d0a2c&skip=0>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2012/eur/208372.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2012/eur/208312.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

<sup>6</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3676176.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3676176.stm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://icelandreview.com/news/2013/07/08/building-mosque-reykjavik-begin-next-year>

<sup>8</sup> [http://peoplemov.in/#t\\_NL](http://peoplemov.in/#t_NL)

<sup>9</sup> <https://ip-journal.dgap.org/en/ip-journal/topics/europe%E2%80%99s-new-populism-islamophobia>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2011/07/norway-massacre-and-nexus-of.html>