

## SPAIN

*Johanna M. Lems*<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The year 2022 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cooperation Agreement signed between the Spanish state and the *Comisión Islámica de España* (Islamic Commission of Spain - CIE). This agreement<sup>2</sup> brought with it the formal recognition of Islam in Spain. It also contains a series of provisions related to the practice of the Islamic religion, as well as to the conservation and promotion of the historical and artistic Islamic heritage. Despite this legal acknowledgement since 1992, at present many of the individual and collective rights granted to Muslims are not respected in practice.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the question of refugees and immigration has been ever present in public debates and political discourse. More recently, the protests and civil society movements in Iran also receive broad media coverage. Public statements that make a distinction between refugees, who must be welcomed, and unwelcome migrants from Africa and Muslim-majority countries, as well as discourse that does not distinguish between the situation of women wearing the hijab in Spain or in Iran, all contribute to the othering of Muslims, and affect their participation as equal citizens in the Spanish context.

The deportation to Morocco in October 2022 of Catalanian activist Mohammed Said Badaoui, demonstrates how State policies focused on suspicion and prevention not only impact the daily lives and opportunities of those who are deported and of their families, but have an

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<sup>1</sup> Johanna M. Lems is assistant professor at the Department of Linguistics and Oriental Studies at the Complutense University of Madrid. She is member of the research group GRAIS ([www.ucm.es/grais](http://www.ucm.es/grais)) and is part of the editorial board of *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos* (Autonomous University of Madrid).

impact on all who are actively involved, or plan to engage, in rights-claiming, especially in the case of foreign nationals.

## Public Debates

On the occasion of the Cooperation Agreement's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022, a number of public-facing Muslims reiterated their discontent with the functioning of the Islamic Commission of Spain, stressing the need for a change in the management. Mounir Benjelloun, the president of the *Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas* (Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities - FEERI), the second largest Muslim federation, criticised the CIE for its lack of transparency and its failure to duly represent Muslims in Spain when it comes to rights-claiming.<sup>2</sup> A member of the Madrid City Council, Maysoun Douas, also pointed to the inaction by the Islamic Commission of Spain particularly with respect to the right to Islamic rite burials in the country.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that the Cooperation Agreement envisages the availability of halal food in publicly funded schools, in 2022 (that is, 30 years later) hardly any school or public institution provides a halal menu. Across the country, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by Muslim individuals and entities seeking compliance with their civil and religious rights, particularly demands related to cemetery land for Islamic burials,<sup>4</sup> religious education at schools,<sup>5</sup> and halal food.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Aretio, Marian, “‘La CIE es un ejemplo de fracaso de representación total’, Mounir Benjelloun, FEERI”, *islami*, 25 November 2022, [www.islami.es/articulo/entrevistas/cie-es-ejemplo-fracaso-representacion-total-mounir-benjelloun-presidente-feeri/20221125184912005090.html](http://www.islami.es/articulo/entrevistas/cie-es-ejemplo-fracaso-representacion-total-mounir-benjelloun-presidente-feeri/20221125184912005090.html), accessed 27 December 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Aretio, Marian, “‘lo que se debe cambiar es el enfoque de la interlocución’, Maysoun Douas, concejala de Más Madrid”, *islami*, 13 December 2022, <https://www.islamnews.es/articulo/entrevistas/que-debe-cambiar-es-enfoque-interlocucion-maysoun-douas-concejala-mas-madrid/20230511121217001027.html>, accessed 25 November 2023.

<sup>4</sup> [www.islamicfundraising.com/project/proyecto-cementerio-islamico-en-galicia](http://www.islamicfundraising.com/project/proyecto-cementerio-islamico-en-galicia), accessed 31 January 2023.

<sup>5</sup> [www.elhalal.es/articulo/actualidad/buscan-docentes-eri-murcia-pdf-informacion-autorizacion/20220218220305004627.html](http://www.elhalal.es/articulo/actualidad/buscan-docentes-eri-murcia-pdf-informacion-autorizacion/20220218220305004627.html), accessed 31 January 2023. <https://islamenmurcia.blogspot.com/2022/10/se-buscan-maestros-de-religion-islamica.html> accessed 25 November 2023, por Ros, Paulino, 11.10.22

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, both the war and its far-reaching implications are very present in daily news and public debate in Spain. The debates about refugees from Eastern Europe have also led to opportunistic political discourse that criminalises migrants from Africa and Muslim-majority countries. In March 2022, the leader of the far-right political party Vox, Santiago Abascal, declared in a plenary session of Parliament, that those who flee from Ukraine are refugees and should be distinguished from “invasions of young Muslim men of military age who throw themselves against our borders”. In June 2022, an enormous tragedy took place in Melilla, a Spanish enclave on the North African coast. Here, 1,700 persons, including many refugees from Sudan,<sup>7</sup> while trying to enter Spain at the border between Nador (Morocco) and Melilla,<sup>8</sup> 23 migrants were confirmed dead.<sup>9</sup> In November 2022, the Social Democrat government and the conservative opposition vetoed for the second time the establishment of a commission of inquiry into this deadly tragedy at the Melilla border crossing.<sup>10</sup>

The 2022 report by NGO Network Welcome (*Red Acoge*) on the treatment of migration in the Spanish media,<sup>11</sup> shows how the use of language, sources and images, as well as the selection of topics, are directly linked to the dehumanisation of certain groups of people. On

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<sup>6</sup> [www.elhalal.es/articulo/actualidad/solicita-menu-halal-tus-hijos/20220920100839004959.amp.html](http://www.elhalal.es/articulo/actualidad/solicita-menu-halal-tus-hijos/20220920100839004959.amp.html), accessed 31 January 2023.

<sup>7</sup> <https://elpais.com/espana/2022-11-13/volveremos-a-intentar-saltar-la-valla-de-melilla.html>, accessed 23 December 2022. As the Spanish consulate in Morocco does not process the applications for international protection, some refugees try to enter Europe via Melilla: Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, *Donde habita el olvido* (Madrid: Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2022), <https://sjme.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/INFORME-FRONTERA-SUR-2022.pdf>, p.34, accessed 27 December 2022.

<sup>8</sup> [www.solidarywheels.org/\\_files/ugd/0a7d28\\_f8666f21da654219a7e712447d8c5422.pdf](http://www.solidarywheels.org/_files/ugd/0a7d28_f8666f21da654219a7e712447d8c5422.pdf), accessed 23 December 2022.

<sup>9</sup> NGOs on the ground confirmed 37 deaths: <https://hyphenonline.com/2022/08/10/melilla-massacre-sparks-a-new-reckoning-on-migrant-rights-in-spain/>, accessed 31 January 2023.

<sup>10</sup> <https://ecre.org/spain-government-sticks-to-script-on-melilla-massacre-in-face-of-mounting-evidence-disputing-it-mps-call-for-marlaska-to-resign-spain-and-morocco-continue-strengthening-relations/>, accessed 13 January 2023; or [www.defensordelpueblo.es/resoluciones/actuaciones-y-medidas-de-los-cuerpos-y-fuerzas-de-seguridad-del-estado-en-melilla/](http://www.defensordelpueblo.es/resoluciones/actuaciones-y-medidas-de-los-cuerpos-y-fuerzas-de-seguridad-del-estado-en-melilla/), accessed 23 December 2022; and <https://elpais.com/espana/2022-11-18/marlaska-explicara-la-tragedia-de-melilla-ante-el-pleno-del-congreso-el-30-de-noviembre.html>, accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>11</sup> See Red Acoge, *Informe Inmigracionalismo 2022. Tratamiento mediático de las migraciones en España* (Madrid: Red Acoge, 2022), <https://inmigracionalismo.es/>, accessed 1 January 2023.

28 November 2022, the Spanish Supreme Court confirmed the sentence given in 2021 to national newspaper ABC, condemning it for causing “moral damage” and violating the honour and image of four citizens.<sup>12</sup> The newspaper had used an unrelated image of these citizens—Imam Mohammad Idrissi Alcaraz and three other Muslim men—in an article about terrorism, next to the words “jihadi terrorism” written in capital letters. Despite the responsibility of media professionals being central to this case, the sentence received hardly any coverage in other newspapers.

During 2022, and particularly at the start of the school year in September, several incidents were reported in different territories of the Spanish state, such as in Malaga (Andalusia)<sup>13</sup> and various municipalities of the Madrid region,<sup>14</sup> in which the school management prohibited students wearing the hijab from entering the school building. This prohibition, based on the educational centres’ dress codes, hinders the fundamental right of these students to access to schooling.

### **Transnational Links**

As a country of important immigration and emigration flows, Spain, and the transnational connections of its inhabitants, are “nothing but the reflection of a world which is much more interconnected and interdependent than what national narratives allows us to assume”.<sup>15</sup> Cross-border relations between Islamic communities are commonplace and not inherent grounds for questioning loyalties. Especially during Islamic festivities, commemorations, or

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<sup>12</sup> [www.eldiario.es/andalucia/desdeelsur/jueces-odio-prensa\\_132\\_9763749.html](http://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/desdeelsur/jueces-odio-prensa_132_9763749.html), accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>13</sup> [www.malagahoy.es/malaga/madre-ninas-hiyab-Malaga-colegio-permita\\_0\\_1663634565.html](http://www.malagahoy.es/malaga/madre-ninas-hiyab-Malaga-colegio-permita_0_1663634565.html), accessed 15 January 2023.

<sup>14</sup> <https://22minutoscon.com/2022/09/17/un-instituto-madrileno-impide-la-entrada-a-clase-a-varias-alumnas-por-usar-hiyab/>, accessed 15 January 2023.

<sup>15</sup> See Arigita, Elena, “Sharía y ciudadanía en España: una propuesta para investigar los marcos normativos y la dimensión transnacional”, *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos*, vol.29 (2020), pp.6-19, <https://doi.org/10.15366/reim2020.29.002>, accessed 15 January 2023.

the month of Ramadan, Muslim communities may receive guest speakers from abroad, such as imams or sheikhs. For example, in May 2022, the *Fundación Alulbeyt* (Alulbeyt Foundation) organised a conference on the occasion of the martyrdom of Imam Yafar bin Mohammed Assadeq, hosting speaker Sayyid Muhannad Jamal Ed-Din from Iraq.<sup>16</sup> In March 2022, the Spanish *Minhaj-ul-Quran* community received Dr Hassan Mohi-ud-Din Qadri, the chairman of the *Minhaj-ul-Quran* International (MQI) Supreme Council, based in Lahore, Pakistan, on the occasion of an MQI workers' convention.<sup>17</sup>

### **Law and Domestic Politics**

In February 2022, the region of Castilla and León held elections, and far-right party Vox entered into a coalition Government with the right-wing *Partido Popular*. The political discourse of Vox is very much in line with other European extreme-right formations, and is to a large extent built on anti-migrant and anti-Islam rhetoric, associating Muslims with criminality, violence, and as a major threat to national security.<sup>18</sup> Also in February, though in Southern Spain, the Murcia High Court of Justice ruled against the regional Council of Education, controlled by Vox at the time. The Court stated that the Council of Education's administrative silence towards a Muslim family who had applied for several years for Islamic education at school—and having complied with all the necessary requirements—was in violation of the family's constitutional right to religious freedom, and to a religious education for their children according to their convictions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://alulbeyt.org/conferencia/>, accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>17</sup> [www.minhaj.org/english/Overseas/tid/53547/Spain-MQI-is-the-largest-peace-movement-of-the-21st-century-Dr-Hassan-Mohi-ud-Din-Qadri.html](http://www.minhaj.org/english/Overseas/tid/53547/Spain-MQI-is-the-largest-peace-movement-of-the-21st-century-Dr-Hassan-Mohi-ud-Din-Qadri.html), accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>18</sup> See also Dieste, Sonsoles and Eduardo Tena (eds), *La derecha radical europea en la actualidad. Discurso de odio e islamofobia* (Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 2023).

<sup>19</sup> <https://elpais.com/educacion/2022-02-14/la-justicia-da-la-razon-a-una-familia-de-murcia-que-reivindica-el-derecho-de-sus-hijos-a-estudiar-religion-islamica-en-el-colegio.html>, accessed 15 November 2022.

In October 2022, civil rights activist Mohamed Said Badaoui was deported from Spanish territory. Badaoui, who left Morocco as a young boy and has been living in Catalonia for 30 years, is married to a woman from Valencia and their three children were born in Spain. Mohamed Badaoui is the founder of Adedcom,<sup>20</sup> an association registered in Catalonia for the defence of the rights of the Muslim community (*Associació per la Defensa dels Drets de la Comunitat Musulmana*) and has been spokesman for the mosque in Reus (Tarragona province). However, this rootedness in Spain did not protect him from deportation to Morocco based on a police report accusing him of “radicalisation” without providing evidence or specific information. On a Friday, and in August, Badaoui was given 48 hours to submit representations, which meant that he was practically left without the right to a proper defence. A whole network of citizens, religious communities, human rights entities, and Reus town hall came out in support of Badaoui, organising demonstrations and formulating institutional statements in his favour.<sup>21</sup> A large group of different political parties in Catalonia<sup>22</sup> wrote a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Fernando Grande Marlaska—a social democrat and judge on leave of absence—asking for the immediate revocation of the order of expulsion. However, on 5 October, and after one month in a detention centre for foreign persons in Barcelona (the *Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros*), Badaoui was expelled overnight to Larache, Morocco. The Catalanian government (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) has reported the case to the EU Coordinator for Racism, as an act of institutional racism.<sup>23</sup> Badaoui and his lawyers believe that the reason for his deportation is linked to his application for Spanish citizenship in 2020.<sup>24</sup> Spanish law<sup>25</sup> allows under certain conditions for the deportation of

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<sup>20</sup> <https://adedcom.org/>.

<sup>21</sup> [www.odic.cat/comunicat-del-grup-de-suport-a-mohamed-said-badaoui/](http://www.odic.cat/comunicat-del-grup-de-suport-a-mohamed-said-badaoui/), accessed 17 December 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Political parties from a wide range of ideologies – from *Candidatura d’Unitat Popular* (CUP) to *Junts per Catalunya* (Junts) – all agreed to support this well-known activist against his removal from Spain.

<sup>23</sup> [www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20221119/generalitat-denuncia-europa-deportacion-activista-78789029](http://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20221119/generalitat-denuncia-europa-deportacion-activista-78789029), accessed 17 December 2022.

<sup>24</sup> [www.radiorubi.cat/programs/entrevistes-rubi-al-dia/radiorubi\\_podcast\\_22576?ref=wa](http://www.radiorubi.cat/programs/entrevistes-rubi-al-dia/radiorubi_podcast_22576?ref=wa), accessed 13 January 2023.

foreign nationals based on an administrative expulsion order, attributing a margin of discretion to the police forces.

In terms of developments regarding the content of Islamic education at publicly funded schools in Spain: in September 2022, the State Secretary of Education issued a Resolution<sup>26</sup> publishing the most recent version of the study programmes related to Islam in pre-school, primary, and secondary (obligatory and pre-university) education.

In March, the *Generalitat Valenciana* (regional government of Valencia) created a Monitoring Centre for Equal Treatment, Non-Discrimination, and the Prevention of Hate Crime.<sup>27</sup> The centre's objectives include research, reports, and recommendations, and 27 of its 43 members are representatives of groups, which suffer situations of discrimination, including LGTBI, Roma people, migrants and also religious minorities, such as Muslims.

Regarding the right to be buried in accordance with Islamic funeral custom: in July 2022, the City Council of Madrid adopted a proposal, brought forward by the socialist municipal group, to enable a 10,000m<sup>2</sup> plot at the local cemetery to become a Muslim burial site, managed by the municipal undertaker. However, it could be that a situation like 2006 repeats itself—when a similar proposal was unanimously adopted but was never implemented—since, as of the end of 2022, the Islamic Commission of Spain, being the responsible entity for negotiating the applicable conditions for such a proposal, had not yet answered the initial proposition from the municipal undertaker.

While Madrid is one of Spain's most prosperous regions, close to the city centre, the residents of a marginalised neighbourhood called *La Cañada Real Galiana*, have suffered since

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<sup>25</sup> Art. 54.1. a) of “Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social” (*Organic Law 4/2000*, 11 January, on rights and freedoms of foreign nationals in Spain and their social integration), [www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2000-544](http://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2000-544), accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>26</sup> “Resolución de 16 de septiembre de 2022, de la Secretaría de Estado de Educación, por la que se publican los currículos de la enseñanza de religión islámica correspondientes a Educación Infantil, Educación Primaria, Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato”, [www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2022-15418](http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2022-15418), accessed 17 January 2023.

<sup>27</sup> <https://valenciaplaza.com/nace-observatorio-valenciano-igualdad-no-discriminacion-prevencion-delitos-odio>, accessed 13 January 2023.

October 2020 from a lack of power supply to their houses and streets, that is, for more than two years now. Many families who live in this neighbourhood are of Moroccan origin and Muslim,<sup>28</sup> and approximately half of the 4,000 people living in *La Cañada* are children. In January 2022, even the coldest winter in Madrid's recent history could not convince the responsible politicians to restore the electricity supply. Despite pressure from the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, the Spanish Ombudsman and international NGOs, the Madrid regional, municipal, and State authorities have not taken the appropriate action to resolve the matter. In October 2022, the European Committee of Social Rights, pertaining to the Council of Europe, imposed a deadline on Spain to have the power supply restored before 15 December 2022. However, as of the end of 2022, the inhabitants of *La Cañada* were still without electricity.

### **Activities and Initiatives of Main Muslim Organisations**

In 2022, the *Asociación de Consumidores Halal* (Association of Halal Consumers - ACOHA) was duly registered with the La Rioja Registry of Associations.<sup>29</sup> According to the information on its webpage, ACOHA is “the initiative of men and women who are committed to the value of halal as a healthy, secure and ethical option both for Muslims and for consumers in general”.

<sup>30</sup> Created in December 2020, the association is headquartered in Logroño (capital of the La Rioja region), though its president, Abdelmalik Mohamed, lives in Ceuta. ACOHA's objectives—per the official information<sup>31</sup>—include the education, orientation, information, defence, and representation of its members and other consumers, while it also seeks to establish delegations in other parts of the Spanish state territory.

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<sup>28</sup> Especially in the deprived sectors five and six of this area.

<sup>29</sup> <https://web.larioja.org/dato-abierto/datoabierto?n=opd-853>, accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>30</sup> [www.acoha.es/articulo/acoa/unete-modelo-solicitud-simpatizante-pdf/20211110100009000997.html](http://www.acoha.es/articulo/acoa/unete-modelo-solicitud-simpatizante-pdf/20211110100009000997.html), accessed 13 January 2023.

<sup>31</sup> <https://web.larioja.org/dato-abierto/datoabierto?n=opd-853>, accessed 13 January 2023.

During the month of December, several of the federations that compose the *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España* (Union of Islamic Communities of Spain - UCIDE) organised events with a specific focus on young people, religion, and social identity. From 9 until 11 December, *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Andalucía* (Union of Islamic Communities of Andalusia - UCIDAN) held the XXIV Islamic Congress of the South, under the slogan “Youth and the Muslim family: Challenges and Opportunities”. This congress took place in the province of Malaga and consisted of five workshops in combination with sports and other leisure activities.<sup>32</sup> On 14 December, *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Valencia* (Union of Islamic Communities of Valencia - UCIDVA) hosted an intercultural meeting with other civil society actors in the Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia.<sup>33</sup> From 16 until 18 December 2022, the XIII Islamic Congress of Catalonia was held in Barcelona.<sup>34</sup> This event was organised by the *Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Catalonia* (Union of Islamic Communities of Catalonia - UCIDCAT) with the participation of the *Direcció General d’Afers Religiosos* (General Directorate of Religious Affairs of Catalonia), the *Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia* (Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence), UCIDE, and the Islamic Commission of Spain. The main theme of the congress was “youth, religiosity and the question of faith” and, according to the organisers, some 150 participants—many of whom were young people—attended the lectures and workshops.

## **Muslim Population: History and Demographics**

The conquest by Muslims of the Visigothic kingdom of Toledo in the year 711 C.E., and the subsequent preference for establishing pacts to subject the peninsular territories, gave rise to al-

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<sup>32</sup> <https://ucide.org/xxiv-congreso-islamico-del-sur/>, accessed 17 January 2023.

<sup>33</sup> <https://ucide.org/ucidvalencia-acoge-la-i-encuentro-de-identidades-sociales-religiosas-e-interculturales/>, accessed 17 January 2023.

<sup>34</sup> <https://ucide.org/xiii-congreso-islamico-de-cataluna/>, accessed 17 January 2023.

Ándalus, an Arabic and Muslim country on the geographic space of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>35</sup> The presence of Islam since the eighth century within the territory<sup>36</sup> was a crucial argument in favour of the legal recognition of Islam in 1989 as a “deeply rooted” religion in contemporary Spain. Based on the 1978 Constitution,<sup>37</sup> the State’s mandate to cooperate with “deeply rooted” minority religions led to the accommodation of the Islamic faith and practice, and to the negotiation and signature in 1992 of the Cooperation Agreement between the State and the Islamic Commission of Spain. This latter entity was created as the sole representative for all Muslims in Spain to monitor the execution of the rights granted by the Agreement. The increase in the Muslim population on the Spanish mainland, however, occurred after the signing of this Agreement, and has been to a large extent driven by migrations from North Africa since the 1990s.

Each year, the *Observatorio Andalusi* (Andalusian Monitoring Centre), pertaining to the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE), which is the largest federation of Islamic entities in the country, prepares a demographic report related to the Muslim population in Spain. For this purpose, the country of origin of migrants and of their descendants—regardless of religious beliefs—is taken as an indicator of their Muslimness. In addition, the centre elaborates its figures based on data from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (National Institute for Statistics - INE), the *Registro de Entidades Religiosas del Ministerio de Justicia* (Register of Religious Entities of the Ministry of Justice - RER),<sup>38</sup> the Ministries of Education and Internal Affairs, as well as UCIDE’s own records. No official census is available. Since 2021, the *Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso en España* (Monitoring Centre for Religious Pluralism in Spain)<sup>39</sup> has become more proactive in gathering data, doing research, and providing analysis related to religion and religious pluralism.

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<sup>35</sup> See García Sanjuán, Alejandro, *Coexistencia y conflictos. Minorías religiosas en la península ibérica durante la Edad Media* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2015), pp.7-8.

<sup>36</sup> <https://comisionislamica.org/historia/> accessed 15 January 2023.

<sup>37</sup> [www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1978-31229](http://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1978-31229), accessed 19 January 2023.

<sup>38</sup> <https://maper.mjusticia.gob.es/Maper/RER.action>, accessed 15 January 2023.

## Muslim Population

2,250,486 persons,<sup>40</sup> or 4.7% of the total population in Spain (as of 1 January 2022).

## Ethnic/National Backgrounds

In 2022, approximately 42% of Muslims in Spain were Spanish citizens (950,952 persons; 27,704 of whom were converts). Therefore, 58% of the total Muslim population in Spain were resident aliens, and included the following ethnic/national groups:

Moroccan: 67%

Pakistani: 7.6%

Senegalese: 6%

Algerian: 5%

Nigerian: 2.9%

Malian: 2.2%

Gambian: 1.7%.

## Inner-Islamic Groups

Most Muslims in Spain adhere to Sunni Islam. A few Shi'i (such as the *Alulbeyt* Foundation in Madrid or the *al-Qaim* centre

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<sup>39</sup> Established in 2011 by the Ministry of Justice, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, and the Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence: [www.observatorioreligion.es/el\\_observatorio.html](http://www.observatorioreligion.es/el_observatorio.html), accessed 15 January 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Based on the demographic study of the Muslim population in Spain published by the *Observatorio Andalusi* in 2022: <http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/estademograf.pdf>, accessed 31 March 2022.

Granada, Extremadura, Barcelona) communities exist, but no exact figures are available. The Ahmadis have two mosques in Spain. The oldest is located in Pedro Abad (Córdoba province) and dates from 1982, while the second was inaugurated in 2013 in La Poble de Vallbona (Valencia).

### **Geographical Spread**

The regions in Spain with the largest Muslim population are Catalonia (617,453 persons or 7.9% of its total population), Andalusia (365,675 Muslims which equals 4.3% of its population), Madrid (309,469 people or 4.6% of its population), Valencia (237,671 inhabitants or 4.7% of its population), and Murcia (125,445 people or 8.2% of its population). The situation in the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast is different. In Ceuta, Muslims represent 43.4% of the city's total population, whereas in Melilla 52.3% is Muslim.

### **Number of Mosques**

According to the *Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso en España* (Monitoring Centre for Religious Pluralism in Spain),

there are 1,752 Islamic places of worship across the country, accounting for 22.6% of all places of worship dedicated to minority religions.<sup>41</sup> 332 of these Islamic prayer sites are based in Catalonia, 275 in Andalusia, 229 in Valencia, 132 in Madrid, 119 in Murcia, and 113 in Castilla-La Mancha. The *Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid* (Islamic Cultural Centre of Madrid), also called the M-30 Mosque, is not only the largest mosque in Spain, but also in Europe.

## **Muslim Burial Sites**

*Article 2.5* of the 1992 Cooperation Agreement recognises the right for Muslims in Spain to obtain concessions of land parcels to be reserved for Islamic burials in municipal cemeteries, or in privately owned Islamic cemeteries. However, a 2020 report published by the Islamic Commission of Spain, indicates that in practice only 30 cemeteries in the country offer (limited) space, for a population of more than two million Muslims.<sup>42</sup> Per the Andalusian

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<sup>41</sup> [www.observatorioreligion.es/directorio-lugares-culto/?confesion=Musulmanes](http://www.observatorioreligion.es/directorio-lugares-culto/?confesion=Musulmanes), accessed 15 January 2023.

<sup>42</sup> See Ajana Elouafi, Mohamed, *Informe sobre los cementerios para los musulmanes, a fecha de 10 de abril de 2020* (Madrid: Comisión Islámica de España, 2020).

Monitoring Centre, as of 1 January 2022, approximately 95% of the Islamic communities in Spain lack access to Muslim burials sites. Muslims in the regions of Galicia, Cantabria, Extremadura, and Castilla-La Mancha do not have any plot of land for Islamic burials at their disposal.<sup>43</sup>

### **“Chaplaincy” in State Institutions**

The 1992 Cooperation Agreement grants the right to Islamic religious assistance in hospitals, prisons, and the armed forces. The report published in 2022 by the *Observatorio Andalusi* (Andalusian Monitoring Centre), counted seven imams that were available for religious assistance in detention centres for foreign aliens, 22 in prisons and, since 2021, one imam providing religious counselling in the military prison of the Madrid region.

### **Halal Products**

*Article 14.3* of the 1992 Cooperation Agreement allows halal slaughter, provided that sanitary regulations are complied with. Per *Article 14.4* of this Agreement, halal food

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<sup>43</sup> See also [www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/ourense/2022/10/29/cementerio-multicultural/00031667054948954732295.htm](http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/ourense/2022/10/29/cementerio-multicultural/00031667054948954732295.htm); and <https://mundoislam.com/actualidad/espana/2022/11/23/todavia-no-hay-cementerio-islamico-castellon/>, both accessed 23 December 2022.

will be made available in public institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, and the armed forces, as well as in publicly funded schools. Currently, five halal certifying entities are officially recognised by the Islamic Commission of Spain that may be accredited by the *Entidad Nacional de Acreditación* (National Accreditation Bureau - ENAC),<sup>44</sup> the oldest of which is the *Instituto Halal* ([www.institutohalal.com/](http://www.institutohalal.com/)), established in 2003 by the *Junta Islámica* (Islamic Council, [www.juntaislamica.org/](http://www.juntaislamica.org/)) and based in Córdoba. In December 2020, the *Asociación de Consumidores Halal* (Association for Halal Consumers - ACOHA) was created in Logroño (La Rioja), and a new digital publication was launched, [www.elhalal.es](http://www.elhalal.es), to inform Muslims in Spain about halal-related issues.

## **Dress Code**

Though no specific State law is in place prohibiting Muslim women from wearing the hijab in the public space, in practice many women with a headscarf encounter

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<sup>44</sup> <https://comisionislamica.org/comisiones/comision-de-normalizacion-halal/>, accessed 13 January 2023.

difficulties in their daily lives, particularly in access to the labour or housing market.

### **Places of Islamic Learning and Education**

The *an-Nahda al-Yadida* school in Madrid, founded in 1982 and also called “the Libyan school”, is a private centre which provides a full educational offering in the Arabic language (following the Libyan education system) from the first years of obligatory schooling until university. It relies on the Department of Culture of the Libyan Embassy for its existence, and the majority of its students are children of employees at the embassy. As regards higher Islamic learning in the Spanish language, several private entities offer online courses in the Islamic Sciences:

- The *Instituto Al-Andalusia* (<https://instituto.alandalusia.education>), whose educational offering includes a four-year degree in Islamic Sciences and Theology, and a two-year curriculum to become an *alim/alimah*. As part of the same organisation, the *Academia Al-Andalusia* offers Islamic and Arabic

teaching to students within the four-16 age group.

- The International Islamic University for Sciences ([www.universityiuis.org/](http://www.universityiuis.org/)) is based in Barcelona and, according to the information on its webpage, has offered since 2017 an online degree in Islamic Sciences in the Spanish language.
- *Academia Khayrukum* (Sant Marc Street 4, Badalona [www.instagram.com/proyecto\\_khayrukum/](http://www.instagram.com/proyecto_khayrukum/)) was founded by Hajar Hniti under the slogan “Your Life Project”. It organises online courses, on-site lectures, and pilgrimage tours.
- *Adam Academia*, an online academy founded by Karamy Singateh ([www.adamacademia.com/](http://www.adamacademia.com/)), for the Arabic language, and Qur’anic, and Islamic studies.

### **Muslim Media and Publications**

- *Medina*, a weekly programme of 15 minutes broadcast on the Spanish public television channel (*TVE*), with information related to Islam and Muslim

populations in Spain.

- *Verislam* ([www.verislam.com/](http://www.verislam.com/)), an internet portal promoted by the *Junta Islámica* (Islamic Council), and since 2020 the successor of media outlet *Webislam*.
- *Islami* ([www.islami.es](http://www.islami.es)), an internet magazine with information and opinions on current issues related to Islam in Spain. This magazine is an initiative of the same persons who established the ACOHA and [elhalal.es](http://elhalal.es).
- *Elhalal.es*, a digital newspaper which offers, since December 2020, information on halal-related subjects, not limited to food but also including social practices.
- *Mundo Islam* (<https://mundoislam.com/>), an online journal publishing news on Islam in Spanish since 2018.
- As regards radio broadcasting services, since the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Muslims Radio (*Musulmanes Radio*, <https://mmradio.es/>) provides a service

from Mallorca, and Radio Nurain (*Radio Dos Luces*, [www.radiodosluces.com/](http://www.radiodosluces.com/)) from Gran Canaria.

## Main Muslim Organisations

As of December 2022, the Register of Religious Entities of the Ministry of Justice counted 1,971 Muslim entities spread across the territory, which comprise 53 federations (including the Islamic Commission of Spain).<sup>45</sup> Approximately half of these entities adhere to the following two federations:

- The Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (*Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España* - UCIDE, 5-7 Anastasio Herrero, 28020, Madrid, tel.: ++34 915708889, [www.ucide.org](http://www.ucide.org)). UCIDE is the largest federation in Spain of Islamic entities, with more than 800 communities adhering to it.<sup>46</sup> Since 2020, Aiman Adlbi has been the president of UCIDE.
- The Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (*Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas* - FEERI, 1-3A General Ricardo Ortega, 07006, Palma de Mallorca). Formally registered in 1989, FEERI brings together approximately 200 entities. Its president is Mounir Benjelloun, and has been since 2012.
- The Islamic Commission of Spain (*Comisión islámica de España* - CIE, 187-1ºD Bravo Murillo, 28020, Madrid, email: [administracion@comisionislamica.org](mailto:administracion@comisionislamica.org), <https://comisionislamica.org/>). UCIDE and FEERI cofounded this group in 1992 at the request of the Spanish state, with the purpose of serving as an umbrella organisation to

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<sup>45</sup> <https://maper.mjusticia.gob.es/Maper/buscarRER.action>, accessed 30 December 2022.

<sup>46</sup> <https://ucide.org/federacion/>, accessed 30 December 2022.

act as the State's sole interlocutor for signing and monitoring the Cooperation Agreement (*Law 26/1992*). Since 2020, CIE's president has been Aiman Adlbi.