UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Solicitation Number: USCIRF RFQ22003
Examination of Anti-Muslim Bias in Europe

I. OBJECTIVE

This research would seek to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of anti-Muslim bias—whether government-driven or from non-state actors—in European countries and official responses to it, to assist USCIRF in developing specific and effective recommendations for United States policy. Areas of study should include—but not be limited to—laws, discrimination in public institutions, prejudice through the immigration process, online harassment, verbal abuse, and violent attacks. USCIRF is interested in proposals for comparative research on the contexts and approaches taken in countries within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region, including France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, at a minimum.

II. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom ("USCIRF" or "Commission") is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). USCIRF has nine Commissioners that are appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both political parties. USCIRF receives $3.5 million in appropriations annually. USCIRF is separate from the State Department, although the Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is a non-voting *ex officio* Commissioner.

USCIRF is statutorily mandated to (1) monitor and review the facts and circumstances of religious freedom abroad; (2) make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress regarding international religious freedom; and (3) evaluate U.S. policies in response to violations of and progress towards religious freedom in foreign countries. Further, USCIRF is mandated to evaluate the potential effects of its policy recommendations on religious communities and individuals whose rights have been violated.

Inherent in religious freedom is the right to believe or not believe as one's conscience leads, and live out one's beliefs openly, peacefully, and without fear. Freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, association, and assembly. While religious freedom is America's first freedom, it also is a core human right international law and treaty recognize; a necessary component of U.S. foreign policy and America's commitment to defending democracy and freedom globally; and a vital element of national security, critical to ensuring a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable world.

III. SCOPE

The Contractor shall focus the research on areas to include but not limited to:

- An examination of the diverse manifestations of anti-Muslim bias in each country of research, perpetrated by the government and non-state actors. For governments, the

research will describe any law or policy that disproportionately limits the right to freedom of religion or belief for Muslims, as well as discriminatory language employed by government officials. For non-state actors, the research will highlight the number and types of hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents – as defined by the OSCE – and illustrative examples of attacks that contextualize country conditions. The research should consider intersectionality in hate crimes, as well as the diverse communities of Muslims residing in the countries examined.

- An analysis of each government's response to anti-Muslim hatred perpetrated by government officials and non-state actors in the country, including the availability of security assistance to Muslim institutions, the engagement of law enforcement with Muslim communities, and judicial efficacy in adjudicating hate crime cases. The research shall consider the effectiveness of these responses in combatting anti-Muslim hatred and protecting Muslim communities, mosques, cemeteries, and other places or property.

- A review of how United States foreign policy has engaged on the issue of anti-Muslim bias in these countries, and any recommendations for improved engagement by the U.S. government to address this situation.

IV. DELIVERABLES

Task/Deliverable	Due Date
1. Kick off meeting with USCIRF	Within 2 weeks from award of contract
2. Proposed method for research study, with an expected timeline for completion	Within 4 weeks from award of contract
3. Interim report of research findings, including initial identification of incidents, analysis of government response, and supporting information	Within 12 weeks from award of contract
4. Draft report, with recommendations for the U.S. government	To be determined
5. Briefing to USCIRF on the results of the research	2 weeks before end of contract period
6. Final report, with recommendations for the U.S. government, which incorporates edits provided by USCIRF	1 week before end of contract period
7. Monthly research status updates	Monthly

V. DURATION OF EFFORT

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USCIRF expects the research to be completed within four to six months, depending on the number of countries to be covered in the research.

VI. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The following individual is designated as the authorized USCIRF representative under this solicitation:

Contracting Officer:	Erin D. Singshinsuk
Email:	esingshinsuk@uscirf.gov
Designated Contracting Officer Representative:	Roy Haskins
Email:	rhaskins@uscirf.gov

Any questions concerning the solicitation should be sent via email to Roy Haskins at rhaskins@uscirf.gov no later than June 17, 2022, by 12:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time. In order to be considered for award, offers conforming to the requirements of the solicitation **must be received, electronically via .pdf, no later than 12:00 pm on June 30, 2022** at the following email address:

Roy Haskins
Director of Finance and Operations
rhaskins@uscirf.gov

The quotation must be signed by an official authorized to bind you or your organization and it shall contain a statement to the effect that the quotation is firm for at least 90 days from date of receipt by USCIRF. The quotation must be prepared in accordance with the instructions outlined within this Request for Quote ("RFQ").

This solicitation does not commit USCIRF to pay for the cost of preparation and submission of a quotation. It is brought to your attention that the Contracting Officer is the only individual who can legally commit USCIRF to the expenditure of public funds in connection with this proposed acquisition.

USCIRF may award a contract/task order on the basis of the initial offer received, without discussions. Therefore, the initial offer must contain the offeror's best terms from a cost and price standpoint. Award will be made based on factors other than price alone.

Prices offered should include any USCIRF trade discounts. In order for USCIRF to give proper consideration toward awarding a contract/task order, your quotation must be accompanied by a published price list or other cost information used to establish the prices offered.

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USCIRF reserves the right to reject any or all quotations received. It is understood that your quotation will become part of the official file on this matter without obligation to USCIRF.

Note: Contact with any USCIRF personnel regarding this solicitation, other than the authorized representative, Erin Singshinsuk, from this date up to date of award is prohibited.

VII. SUBMISSION OF VOLUMES

If interested in responding to this RFQ, please provide two separate copies that consist of the information listed below. Names and telephone numbers of persons authorized to conduct negotiations, as well as the name of the official authorized to bind the Quoter or their organization shall be clearly identified.

A. Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall include:

- A signature by an individual authorized to negotiate on behalf of the organization.
- Solicitation number
- The following statement: "Quote remains valid for 90 days after submission."
- Certification statements indicating that the Organization or Individual is:
    - Free of any Conflicts of Interest
    - Eligible to do business with the Federal Government

B. Volume 1: Technical Understanding and Approach, Past Performance, and Key Personnel

The technical quote shall address the requirements in Sections III and IV of this RFQ. The Quoter shall demonstrate their proposed methodology and approach. The concise description shall cover the Quoter's understanding of the activities as they relate to specific tasks to be performed, as well as the roles and relationship between proposed personnel, firm, and quality control, and subcontracts (if any).

Bidders should provide insight into the methodology and approach that they would use in providing advice to USCIRF in achieving the objectives of this solicitation. Innovative approaches and demonstrated creativity will be noted and considered in the evaluation.

C. Volume 2: Price Proposal

Price proposal shall be separate and complete so that evaluation may be accomplished independently of the technical proposal.

The offerors must provide a Firm-Fixed Price proposal that covers all services and deliverables described in Sections III and IV. For "Analysis Only" the offerors should provide labor

categories and applicable rates to ensure the level of effort can be assessed during the evaluation.

VIII. QUOTE FORMAT

The electronic quote shall be prepared so that if the quote is printed it meets the following format requirements:

- 8.5 x 11 inch paper
- Single-spaced typed lines, with the exception of charts or tables
- 1 inch margins
- 12-point (Times New Roman font) in the text and
- 11-point (Times New Roman font) for charts or tables
- In .PDF form
- All quote pages must be numbered

A. Page Restriction

- Volume 1: Not to exceed 25 pages, excluding the cover page, and Past Performance references and Resumes.
- Volume 2: Not to exceed 5 pages, excluding cover.

IX. EXCLUSION OF QUOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

At any time prior to award, including upon receipt of quotes, USCIRF may exclude a quote from further consideration for reasons such as (but not limited to): the quote does not comply with instructions related to this solicitation; the quote is not among the most highly rated; or the quote is not likely to be selected for award. USCIRF need not notify a Quoter that its quote has been excluded from further consideration nor need it provide the Quoter with a pre-award debriefing.

After receipt of quotes, USCIRF will conduct an evaluation. USCIRF intends to evaluate quotes and issue a contract without communications with Quoters. However, during the evaluation process, USCIRF may, solely at its discretion, communicate with a Quoter for any purpose, such as to gain a better understanding of the quote. As a result of such communication, USCIRF may allow Quoters to submit quote revisions. If quote revisions are allowed, USCIRF may, solely at its discretion, impose non-common due dates for the revisions. In other words, USCIRF may elect to have a quote revision date for a Quoter that is different than the quote revision date for another Quoter(s). USCIRF need not conduct communications with all Quoters. Rather, USCIRF may, at its discretion, conduct communications with one or only some Quoters. Furthermore, USCIRF need not permit all

Quoters to submit quote revisions. Rather, USCIRF may, at its discretion, seek quote revisions from only one or only some Quoters.

X. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The offeror's proposal shall, as a minimum, present its strategy, approach, and realistic plan to accomplish the tasks that are associated with each section of Sections III and IV.

A. Evaluation Factors:

1. *Technical Understanding and Approach* - Technical Understanding and Approach shall include the information requested for the non-price factors described below.

2. *Past Performance* - The offerors must have prior experience conducting similar research and analysis. Past experience with USG-funded projects is highly desirable. The offerors must provide evidence of successfully completing services for three (3) projects that clearly demonstrate successful completion of research. Work shall have been performed within the past five (5) years, and should be comparable to the size, scope, and complexity of this requirement. Offerors shall submit the following information as part of their proposal:
   - Contracts/grants listed may include those entered into by the Federal Government or agencies of state and local government(s).
   - The offeror may describe any quality awards or certifications that indicate the offeror possesses a high-quality process for developing and producing the product or service required. If the award or certification is more than three (3) years old, present evidence that the qualifications still apply.
   - Offerors should notify each of their references that they may be contacted by USCIRF and authorize them to provide the past performance information requested. References other than those identified by the offerors may be contacted by USCIRF, and the information received from them may be used in the evaluation of the offerors' past performance.

   The reference list shall include the following information for each contract/grant:

   a. Name of contracting activity;
   b. Contract Type;
   c. Total Contract Value;
   d. Nature/Description of Contract Work;
   e. Contracting Officer and telephone number; and
   f. Program Manager and telephone number.

3. *Key Personnel* - The offerors shall provide resumes of key personnel that clearly demonstrate the knowledge, experience and education to perform the tasks identified in Sections III and IV.

B. Price Proposal

The proposed price will be evaluated for reasonableness. Price reasonableness pertains to the offerors' ability to project costs which are accurate, and reasonable, as well as the offerors' ability to understand the nature of the work to be performed.

XI. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSALS

USCIRF intends to award a contract/task order to the contractor submitting a proposal considered to be the best value to USCIRF. Determination of best value will be made in review of the technical proposal possessing the best methodology, strategy, approach, personnel and past performance for the services required, and price.

Quoters are cautioned that an award may not necessarily be made to the lowest price Quoter. However, if non-price factors are evaluated as comparatively equal between two or more Quoters, price may become a determinative factor.