

**ISLAM IN CHINA: “PAN-
HALALFICATION” AND
ISLAMOPHOBIA**

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EAI Background Brief No. 1429

Date of Publication: 30 January 2019

Executive Summary

1. The “Pan-Halal” tendency in China in recent years refers to the phenomenon of food and services which traditionally are not halal becoming halal.
2. This has increasingly generated heated Chinese online debate, inciting Islamophobic sentiments from certain segments of the Han Chinese population.
3. Tensions between the Han and Muslims could have roots in Chinese history. However, there is no doubt that the rise of social media today has stimulated Islamophobia among certain segments of the Han Chinese.
4. Islamophobia in China could be caused firstly by terrorist attacks and ethnic violence related to Muslim Uighurs which could have generated a negative image of Muslims among certain Han Chinese.
5. Secondly, as there is a lack of well-established political discourses addressing ethnic and religious issues among Chinese netizens, they tend to express their concerns for Muslim issues with emotional and confrontational languages.
6. Thirdly, the Hui and Uighurs have become increasingly influenced by Wahhabism, a conservative ideology of Islam originating from Saudi Arabia. This has contributed to the widening gap between Islamic and Han Chinese practices.
7. Lastly, the social isolation of Muslim communities like the Uighurs and the Hui from mainstream Han Chinese society has also led to an increase in Islamophobia.
8. The Chinese government generally seeks to promote national unity and does not tolerate behaviours that may lead to ethnic tensions. It has sought to deal with the “pan-halal” tendencies and the Islamophobia with repressive control.

9. This approach might only work in the short run as heavy-handed policies might be able to repress the spread of “pan-halal” phenomenon among the Muslim population and to reduce Islamophobia among certain Han Chinese.
10. However, in the long term heavy-handed policies might result in the increased isolation and disenchantment of the Muslim population who will be feeling persecuted and targeted, leading to an unintended blowback for the central government.