

THE BRIDGE INITIATIVE
A Georgetown University Research Project

Special Report

When Islamophobia Turns Violent:

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections



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PROTECTING PLURALISM.
ENDING ISLAMOPHOIBIA.

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
Georgetown University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report¹ highlights trends and patterns surrounding Islamophobia since the start of the 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle. It does so in the broader context of hatred, violence and social hostilities confronting Muslims as a minority faith group in contemporary America and with a particular focus on acts and threats of violence.

Since 2015, the Bridge Initiative has been chronicling Islamophobic political rhetoric by each presidential candidate irrespective of his or her party affiliation while finding Republican candidates to be the worst offenders to date. In this publication, however, we aim to contextualize such statements nationally and internationally while also exploring potentially violent effects.

To that end, we examined two distinct but overlapping time periods: January 2015 through December 2015 (entire duration of 2015) and March 2015 through March 2016 (2016 presidential election season).

Based upon our analysis, the following observations are noteworthy:

- The 2016 U.S. presidential season began against a backdrop of already rising Islamophobia in 2015, threatening American Muslim religious freedom.
- During the course of 2015, there were approximately **174 reported² incidents** of anti-Muslim violence and vandalism, including: 12 murders; 29 physical assaults; 50 threats against persons or institutions; 54 acts of

¹ The publication of this report would not have been possible without the assistance of and support from Dr. John L. Esposito, Kristin Garrity Sekerci and Nazir Harb Michel, members of Georgetown's Bridge Initiative team.

² Significantly, many incidents remain unreported for a variety of reasons.

vandalism or destruction of property; 8 arsons; and 9 shootings or bombings, among other incidents.

- Anti-Muslim violence remained significantly higher in 2015 than pre- 9/11 levels³ with American Muslims **approximately 6 to 9 times more likely to suffer such attacks**. The number of incidents in 2015 is also higher than the total number of anti-Muslim hate crimes reported in 2014: 154.
- In 2015, **American Muslim men were twice as likely to be victims of physical assaults and 5 to 6 times more likely to be victims of murder than American Muslim women**.
- Since the first candidate announced his bid for the White House in March 2015, there have been approximately **180 reported incidents** of anti-Muslim violence, including: 12 murders; 34 physical assaults; 49 verbal assaults or threats against persons and institutions; 56 acts of vandalisms or destruction of property; 9 arsons; and 8 shootings or bombings, among other incidents.
- Since the start of the presidential election cycle, **American Muslim men have been twice as likely to be victims of physical assaults and about 11 times more likely to be the victims of murder than their female counterparts**.
- Also during each period, **Muslim murder victims were most likely to be aged 18 to 24**.
- **Children and youth – as young as 12 years old – were among those responsible for acts and threats of anti-Muslim violence**.

³ According to the FBI, there were approximately 20 to 30 anti-Muslim hate crimes annually prior to September 11, 2001.

- Although Islamophobia made an appearance during the first GOP debate in August 2015, the first **surge** of anti-Muslim political rhetoric occurred in September 2015.
- It corresponded with an international development: **the Syrian refugee crisis**. The deepening crises dominated news media headlines in the U.S. and Europe potentially highlighting the media impact on political discourse.
- This surge in September 2015 was accompanied by approximately **10 reported incidents or threats of violence**, including 3 murders. In comparison, there was one (1) such incident in August 2015 representing a **significant increase in anti-Muslim violence** over the course of one month.
- Donald Trump, the GOP presidential front-runner at the time of publication, escalated anti-Muslim vitriol in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris, France in November 2015 rather than urge calm or international unity. The attacks signify an international event that triggered a second surge in Islamophobic rhetoric in addition to the uptick in bias attacks.
- Mr. Trump made many anti-Muslim statements during televised appearances on mainstream news media outlets, impacting millions of viewers across the U.S. and around the world.
- As Mr. Trump called for shutting down mosques⁴ in the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks and the mass shootings in San Bernardino, California in December 2015, anti-

⁴ See "Trump Doubles Down On Closing Mosques: 'We're Gonna Have No Choice' (VIDEO)." *Talking Points Memo*. 18 Nov. 2015. <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/donald-trump-sean-hannity-mosque-closing>

Muslim attacks initially tripled⁵ with nearly half of those attacks directed against mosques.

- Anti-Muslim attacks surged once more in December 2015. There were **53 total attacks that month**, 17 of which targeted mosques and Islamic schools⁶ and 5 of which targeted Muslim homes. By comparison, when the presidential election season began just 9 months earlier, there were only 2 anti-Muslim attacks. Attacks on Muslims during this month **constitute approximately 1/3 of all attacks** last year. In fact, in December 2015, anti-Muslim attacks occurred almost **daily** and often **multiple times a day**.
- **At least three separate incidents⁷ of violence involved perpetrators who were public supporters of presidential candidate Donald Trump.** There was otherwise a strong perception among American Muslim leaders that political rhetoric created fertile ground for threats and acts of anti-Muslim violence.
- While anti-Muslim political rhetoric gives cause for alarm, the ensuing violence has inspired expressions of solidarity with the American Muslim community, too.



⁵ See "Hate Crimes And Backlash Against Muslim-Americans Have Tripled In Wake Of Paris And San Bernardino Attacks." *International Business Times*. 19 Dec. 2015 <http://www.ibtimes.com/hate-crimes-backlash-against-muslim-americans-have-tripled-wake-paris-san-bernardino-2233545>

⁶ The schools were located at mosques.

⁷ See "2 Brothers Inspired by Donald Trump Allegedly Attack Homeless Hispanic Man." *Mother Jones*. 20 Aug. 2015 <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2015/08/donald-trump-hispanic-man-attack-boston/>; "Trump! Trump! Trump! attacker allegedly yelled as he beat Hispanic man, Muslim student." *Washington Post*. 14 March 2016 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/03/14/trump-trump-trump-yells-attacker-as-he-beats-hispanic-man-muslim-student/>

METHODOLOGY

Acts or Threats of Violence

The acts or threats of violence informing our findings were retrieved employing electronic databases that yielded related articles published in local and national news media outlets during two distinct but overlapping time periods: January 2015 through December 2015, and March 2015 through March 2016. Additionally, statements surrounding possibly religiously motivated bias attacks and published by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) were also considered. Incidents are provided in the attached addendum.

Murders and Physical Attacks

Data reflects incidents where victims were Muslims or perceived to be Muslim even if they were, in fact, Middle Eastern, African or South Asian non-Muslims.

Verbal or Written Assaults, Harassment, or Threats

Data reflects incidents communicated in-person or writing, telephonically, and via social media posts subject to investigation by law enforcement. This also includes plots or conspiracy to commit violence, or, in two cases, fake anthrax mailed to American Muslim organizations.

Vandalisms or Destruction of Property

Data reflects incidents involving specific references to Muslims or Islam, as well as those involving mosques, homes, and/or businesses with a perceived affiliation with Muslims.

Arsons

Data reflects incidents involving mosques, businesses and homes with a perceived affiliation with Muslims.

Shootings and Bombings Not Resulting in Death

Data reflects instances of shootings or bombings targeting Muslim institutions or homes.

Armed Demonstrations Outside Mosques

Data reflects armed demonstrations outside of mosques where the threat of violence existed.

Incitement

Data reflects examples of incitement to violence, verbal and written, that include explicitly violent language (e.g. “Kill All Muslims,” “Death to Islam,” etc.) but not necessarily directed at a specific individual.

Islamophobic Political Rhetoric

Generally

The Islamophobic rhetoric informing our findings were retrieved employing electronic databases that yielded related articles published in local and national news media outlets during the stated time periods. Such statements exhibit generalization (make a simplified statement about “Muslims” or “Islam” based on the actions of a select few); misattribution (suggest that an action carried out by a Muslim is necessarily linked to his or her faith); reductionism (representing Muslims’ diversity to one single issue, i.e., jihad, Sharia, etc.); or blatant prejudice. Statements are provided in the attached addendum.

The Case of “Radical Islam”

Over the course of the election season, numerous candidates have discussed the threat of “radical Islam,” or “Islamic terrorism,” or have used other similar verbal constructions to convey a threat that they believe stems from the religion of Islam or from within the Muslim community. These examples, too numerous to compile in one report, are not included as examples of Islamophobic rhetoric here, though they are worthy of discussion for a few specific reasons.

Many of the politicians who use this language couple it with acknowledgments that the entire Muslim community is not to blame for the actions of a violent few. By qualifying the perceived threat as “radical Islam” versus “Islam” writ large, for example, they seek to communicate a distinction. This is quite obviously different from campaign rhetoric that suggests that Muslims cannot or should not be president, or that they should be banned *en masse* from immigrating to the United States.

Despite this rhetorical qualification, this type of language is fraught with problems, and it can contribute to deep-seated anxieties and prejudices that the public has about Islam and Muslims — especially in an election season where they are otherwise targeted. The insistence on retaining the word “Islam” within descriptions of extremism or terrorism, even if moderated by adjectives that are intended to specify the threat, suggests that the religion is the primary driver of terrorism or extremism. The result of this is the unfortunate, and even dangerous, idea that all who follow the Islamic faith are more prone to acts of violence or terrorism.

Within the context of the instant election season, where explicit expressions of Islamophobia are unbridled, we leave further discussion of problematic terminology such as “radical Islam” for another day.



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

 In March 23, 2015, Texan Senator Ted Cruz became the first Republican candidate to declare his candidacy¹ for the White House, thus kicking off the 2016 presidential campaign season – one that would be punctuated by frequent bouts of Islamophobic rhetoric and policy posturing that singled out American Muslims as potential security risks. It is significant to note that the religious freedom landscape confronting American Muslims at the outset of the presidential campaign season last spring was already alarming. Approximately one month prior to Senator Cruz's announcement, three (3) American Muslim youth — Deah Barakat, Yusor Abu-Salha and Razan Abu-Salha — were murdered by their neighbor in their homes near the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill campus.

Local law enforcement authorities investigating the murders cited an allegedly long-standing parking dispute as the likely motive. But, the victims' family members and community activists pointed to a particularized fear that at least one of the victims previously articulated concerning Craig Hicks. Many cited the gruesome fashion in which the three youth were executed and argued that the incident was an anti-Muslim hate crime² motivated by the victims' Islamic faith and religious identity.

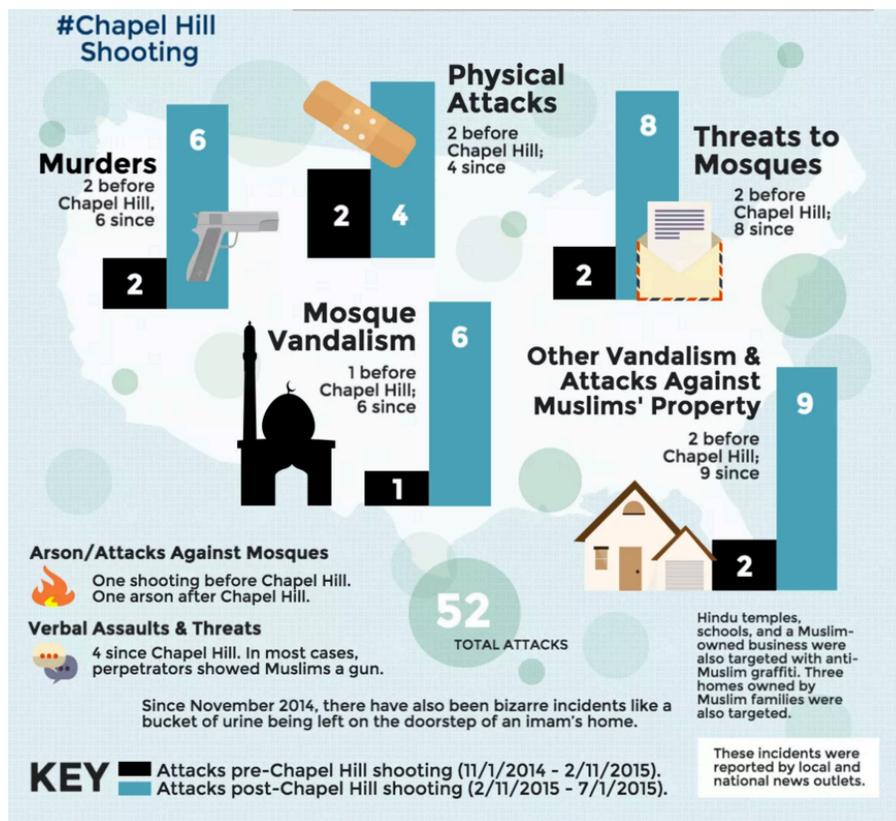
Notably, these murders did not happen in isolation. Rather, as this report and our prior research demonstrate, they are reflective of an intensifying climate of Islamophobia. After examining a six-month period from November 2014 through July 2015, we found fifty-two (52) violent attacks against Muslims and Muslim organizations. These included eight (8) murders; six (6) physical assaults; ten (10) threats to mosques;

¹ See "Ted Cruz: 'I am running for president of the United States.'" *Washington Post*. 23 March 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/03/23/ted-cruz-announces-presidential-run/>

² See "Victims' Father Says Chapel Hill Triple Homicide Was a 'Hate Crime.'" *The Charlotte Observer*. 11 Feb. 2015 <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/latest-news/article10429376.html>

seven (7) acts of vandalism against a mosque; and eleven (11) acts of vandalism involving Muslim homes, as illustrated in the infographic below. In fact, there were more attacks against Muslim homes than communal property during this particular period. While attacks against mosques convey a symbolic message to Muslims that they are unwelcome, attacks against homes are arguably more traumatic and threatening. Such incidents communicate that Muslims are not safe even in the most intimate of American settings.

Significantly, this report reveals a distressing snapshot of the contemporary American Muslim experience. Over the course of 2015, there were 174 reported acts or threats of anti-Muslim violence, including: twelve (12) murders; twenty-nine (29) physical assaults; fifty (50) threats against persons or institutions; fifty-four (54) acts of vandalism or destruction of property; eight (8) arsons; and nine (9) shootings or bombings, among other incidents.



The data reveals that acts and threats of anti-Muslim violence remained significantly higher than pre- 9/11 levels with American Muslims approximately six (6) to nine (9) times more likely to suffer threats and attacks.³ During 2015, American Muslim men were twice as likely to be victims of physical assaults and five (5) to six (6) times more likely to be murdered.

Moreover, since Senator Cruz announced his presidential bid last March, there have been approximately 180 reported acts or threats of anti-Muslim violence, including: twelve (12) murders; thirty-four (34) physical assaults; forty-nine (49) verbal assaults or threats against persons and institutions; fifty-six (56) acts of vandalisms or destruction of property; nine (9) arsons; and eight (8) shootings or bombings, among other incidents.

During the 2016 presidential election season, American Muslim men have been twice as likely to be victims of physical assaults and about eleven (11) times more likely to be murdered than their female counterparts. And, in both time periods, murder victims were most likely Muslim youth ages eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24). As noted further below, a number of perpetrators were also children and youth, and as young as twelve-years-old.

Of course, many incidents remain unreported to and by law enforcement officials.⁴ Additionally, the instant analysis does not consider other aspects of the American Muslim religious freedom experience such as incidents of bias-based bullying in educational institutions; religious discrimination in places of public accommodation (amusement park, bank or restaurant); or employment discrimination when securing work or once on the job.

³ According to the FBI, there were about 20 to 30 anti-Muslim hate crimes annually prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

⁴ See "FBI: Reported Hate Crimes Down Except against Muslims," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, November 16, 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/11/16/fbi-reported-hate-crimes-down-nationally-except-against-muslims>.

Rather, we focus exclusively on acts or threats of anti-Muslim violence.



The background of the image is a blue-tinted photograph. It shows a mosque building with a prominent dome and arched windows. In the foreground, the top right corner of an American flag is visible, showing the stars and stripes. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**AMERICAN
MUSLIMS
&
THE RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM
LANDSCAPE**

AMERICAN MUSLIMS AND THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM LANDSCAPE

 In June 16, 2015, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump — who has helped foment Islamophobia this election season — announced his candidacy¹ for high office by accusing Mexicans crossing the border of illegally “bringing drugs ...[and] crime” and of being “rapists.”² Less than one year since launching his presidential bid Mr. Trump’s divisive rhetoric is shrouded in violence including anti-Muslim attacks. In the same period, his popularity increased from an initial 17% to 49%³ culminating in his status as the Republican front-runner in the 2016 presidential race.

So, what did the religious freedom landscape look like in the summer of 2015 amid official announcements of myriad presidential campaigns? Often, we understand religious freedom violations as official restrictions on or government interference with our legal right to believe or worship freely. But such a conceptualization is too narrowly focused. It ignores another important dimension to religious freedom: social hostilities directed towards a minority faith group, in this case American Muslims, by private individuals, organizations and/or social groups.

In illustration, consider the following example. In France, Muslim women suffer official restrictions on religious freedom. Since 2004, the country’s laws prohibit ostensible religious symbols such as the Islamic headscarf, Sikh turban or Jewish kippah. In contrast, American Muslims face no such state interference. Still, social hostilities create formidable barriers to employment

¹ See “Donald Trump announces candidacy for president.” *CNBC*. 16 June 2015 <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/06/16/donald-trump-announces-candidacy-for-president.html>

² “Donald Trump announces candidacy for president.” *CNBC*. 16 June 2015 <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/06/16/donald-trump-announces-candidacy-for-president.html>. Rugar, Aaron. “Timeline: How Trump Took The Low Road To The Top Of The Republican Party.” *ThinkProgress*. 1 March 2016 <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2016/03/01/3755255/donald-trump-super-tuesday-timeline/>

³ See “Timeline: How Trump Took The Low Road To The Top Of The Republican Party.” *ThinkProgress*. 1 March 2016 <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2016/03/01/3755255/donald-trump-super-tuesday-timeline/>

for Muslim women as exemplified in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc.*,⁴ where the popular retailer denied an otherwise qualified teenager a sales associate position explicitly due to her Muslim religious attire (a headscarf). Research⁵ shows that many conspicuous American Muslims are not extended interviews for employment in the first instance. Such hurdles to equal employment are the result of social hostilities. U.S. laws protect religious freedom, at least in theory. But, social hostilities compromise American Muslim religious freedom in reality and not always in a fashion that can be addressed legally.

In July 2015, just weeks after Mr. Trump threw his hat into the presidential ring, there were twelve (12) acts or threats of anti-Muslim violence as compared to just four (4) in June. Note that Mr. Trump announced his plan to build a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border in or around this time.⁶ Did Mr. Trump's xenophobic rhetoric contribute to the ensuing hostility against minorities, including American Muslims?

Below we have listed and provided a calendar view of the twelve (12) instances of anti-Muslim violence in July 2015. While this seems like a trivial number, in the lives of American Muslims, one act or threat of violence — such as a murder, physical attack, shooting or bombing — is likely one too many.

ON JULY 1st, in North Brunswick, New Jersey,⁷ a South Asian man was found on the side of the road, bleeding from the head

⁴ See "Supreme Court rules against Abercrombie in hijab case." *Politico*. 1 June 2015 <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/ambercrombie-fitch-hijab-case-supreme-court-ruling-118492>

⁵ See "An Experiment in Hiring Discrimination," *SSRN*, July 17, 2015, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2031979.

⁶ See "Arizona crowd welcomes Donald Trump's tough stance on immigration," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 July 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/la-na-trump-arizona-rally-20150710-story.html>

⁷ See "NJ Man Found on Road, Bleeding from Head, in Apparent Bias Attack: Police." *NBC New York*. 2 July 2015 <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Bias-Attacks-Asian-Indians-New-Jersey-North-Brunswick-311490871.html>

after a bias attack. He was one of a number of victims who were targeted in a series of violent attacks.

ON JULY 2nd, in Paterson, New Jersey,⁸ the Islamic Center of Passaic County received a swatting hoax. After someone telephoned the local authorities that there was an armed gunman at the mosque, SWAT teams and bomb-disabling robots arrived at the center, conducted extensive sweeps and left with nothing more. The hoax came in the midst of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

ON JULY 4th, in Spokane, Washington,⁹ the exterior of the Bosnia Herzegovina Heritage Association building, was vandalized with graffiti stating, "Death to Islam." Muslims used the building for communal prayer during the holy month of Ramadan.

ON JULY 5th, in Chico, California,¹⁰ the Fusion Hookah Lounge was set ablaze after two men drove by yelling threatening comments. The owners described finding a Molotov cocktail at the site of the fire but investigators stated that there was no sign of a hate crime.

ON JULY 6th, in West York, Pennsylvania,¹¹ a bar's outdoors sign stating, "Death to Islam," helped increase business.

ON JULY 11th, in Manhattan,¹² a 19-year-old Muslim woman adorned in Muslim attire sustained a fractured jaw after a bias attack requiring her to undergo surgery. The perpetrator yelled

⁸ See "Bomb Threat at New Jersey Mosque Was 'Swatting' Hoax: Police." *NBC New York*, 2 July 2015 <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/New-Jersey-Paterson-NJ-Mosque-Threat-Suspicious-Packages-Swatting-Bomb-311418971.html>

⁹ See "FBI investigating hate crime against Bosnia Herzegovina Heritage Association." *KXLY*, 9 July 2015 <http://www.kxly.com/news/spokane-news/fbi-investigating-hate-crime-against-bosnia-herzegovina-heritage-association/34086616>.

¹⁰ See "Witnesses say fire started by men making 'ethnic' comments." *KRCR News*, 2 July 2015. <http://www.krcrtv.com/news/local/witnesses-say-fire-started-by-men-making-ethnic-comments/33972732>

¹¹ See "'Death to Islam' signs boosting business at West York bar." *FOX43*, 6 July 2015. <http://fox43.com/2015/07/06/death-to-islam-signs-boosting-business-at-west-york-bar/>

¹² See "Pakistani Muslim woman, 19, undergoes jaw surgery after Chinatown bias attack." *NY Daily News*, 15 July 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/muslim-woman-19-undergoes-jaw-surgery-bias-attack-article-1.2293226>.

anti-Muslim slurs after he overheard her speaking in the Urdu language.

ON JULY 13th, in Manassas, Virginia,¹³ a local area mosque was vandalized with worshippers inside. The copper cables to two air conditioner units had been cut.

ON JULY 15th, in Farmersville, Texas,¹⁴ the Islamic Association of Collin County was threatened with desecration over a proposed Muslim cemetery with pig's heads and blood.

ON JULY 16th, in Chattanooga, Tennessee a mentally unstable man who self-identified as Muslim attacked and killed four Marines in Tennessee. The local Muslim community cancelled Eid celebrations to mourn with the victims' families.

ON JULY 17th, in Manassas, Virginia,¹⁵ a local area mosque was vandalized a second time in the same week.

ON JULY 20th, in Moline, Illinois,¹⁶ a window at the Islamic Center of the Quad Cities was shattered while Muslims worshipped inside.

ON JULY 25th, in Roanoke, Virginia,¹⁷ the glass in Masjid An Nur Islamic Center's front doors was shattered and worshippers were subject to obscenities and accusations that they were "terrorists" by neighbors.

¹³ See "Video: CAIR Calls for Probe of Bias Motive for Vandalism Targeting Virginia Mosque." *CAIRtv*. 15 July 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSOLSZbcR3I>.

¹⁴ See "Video: Threat to Desecrate Proposed Texas Muslim Cemetery with Pig's Blood, CAIR Responds." *CAIRtv*, 15 July 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMfJ4DzAIBA>.

¹⁵ See "CAIR Says Va. Mosque Vandalized for 2nd Time in One Week, Stepped-Up Security for Eid Prayers Urged." *CAIRtv*, 17 July 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG3XOXanNqk>.

¹⁶ See "Window shattered at Islamic Center of the Quad Cities." *WQAD8*. 27 July 2015 <http://wqad.com/2015/07/27/window-shattered-at-islamic-center-of-the-quad-cities/>

¹⁷ See "Leaders at Roanoke mosque say worship center targeted by vandals." *WSLS10*. 24 July 2015 <http://wsls.com/2015/07/24/leaders-at-roanoke-mosque-say-worship-center-targeted-by-vandals/>

ON JULY 25th, in Johnson City, Tennessee,¹⁸ the Muslim Community Center of Northeast Tennessee received an online threat of arson.

July 2015

			1 Physical assault 	2 Bomb threat 	3	4 Vandalism 
5 Arson 	6 Incitement 	7	8	9	10	11 Physical assault 
12	13 Vandalism 	14	15 Verbal threat 	16 Chattanooga Mass Shooting	17 Vandalism 	18
19	20 Vandalism 	21	22	23	24	25 Vandalism & arson threat 
26	27	28	29	30	31	

This infographic is part of the Bridge Initiative Special Report "When Islamophobia Turns Violent: the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections."

¹⁸ See "Investigation underway into threat made against Muslim Community Center." *WJHL*. 24 July 2015 <http://wjhl.com/2015/07/24/investigation-underway-into-threat-made-against-muslim-community-center/>

On July 16th, a young American Muslim with a history of mental illness, Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, perpetrated a mass shooting in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Yet, the majority of anti-Muslim violence during this month occurred prior to this highly publicized event. Related anti-Muslim backlash was minimal. The decision by the local Muslim community to cancel Eid celebrations marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, and that had been scheduled for the same day as the mass shooting, may have helped to deflect potential misplaced retaliatory attacks. Rather than celebrating Eid, the Muslims of Chattanooga joined the larger community in their collective grieving. Notably, this is akin to cancelling Christmas, Easter or Hanukkah for Christians and Jews, respectively.

Additionally, following the Chattanooga shooting, President Barack Obama publically characterized the shooter as a “lone gunman”¹⁹ as opposed to a member of a terrorist cell connected to a larger criminal network. He made no reference to “radical Islam” nor did he cast the Islamic faith or Muslim community in a negative light. Would things have been different had President Obama characterized the mentally ill attacker as a “radicalized Muslim” or a “jihadist?” Arguably, the lack of backlash against Chattanooga’s Muslims may speak to the significant role that our leaders play in remedying, or stoking, a general climate of fear and hostility.

Our political leaders are potentially capable of contributing to an atmosphere of hostility toward American Muslims. Texan Senator and Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz, for instance, immediately criticized President Obama’s public statement in the wake of the Chattanooga shooting. Cruz issued an official response²⁰ explaining that there is no such

¹⁹ See “Statement by the President on the Shooting in Chattanooga, TN.” *The White House*. 16 July 2015 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/16/statement-president-shooting-chattanooga-tn>

²⁰ See “Cruz: We Cannot Afford to Wait Six Years to Recognize What Happened Yesterday in Chattanooga for What It Was.” *Cruz News*. 17 July 2015 <https://www.tedcruz.org/news/cruz-we-cannot-afford-wait-six-years-to-recognize-what-happened-yesterday-in-chattanooga-for-what-it-was/>

thing as a “lone gunman” and referred to the mass shooting as “jihad,” a widely misunderstood and misused term in the Islamic faith that simply means “struggle,” but is often mistranslated as “holy war.”²¹

Despite Cruz’s attempts to vilify Islam or Muslims writ large, the attacker’s history of mental illness and substance abuse seems to have helped mitigate potential anti-Muslim violence. The same cannot be said, however, of anti-Muslim political rhetoric this election season, which has only escalated since then.



²¹ Cruz is known to take advice about Muslims and Islam in America from Frank Gaffney, Jr., the leader of a recognized anti-Muslim hate group, the Center for Security Policy. See “Why Is Ted Cruz Seeking Policy Advice from Frank Gaffney, a Leading Islamophobe?” *Democracy Now*. 28 March 2016 http://www.democracynow.org/2016/3/28/why_is_ted_cruz_seeking_policy

A photograph of a man in a dark pinstriped suit, white shirt, and striped tie, speaking into a microphone. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered and reads:

**THE FIRST
SURGE IN
ISLAMOPHOBIC
POLITICAL
RHETORIC**

THE FIRST SURGE IN ISLAMOPHOBIC POLITICAL RHETORIC

Although there were Islamophobic overtones during the first GOP debate in early August 2015 — with South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham and former New York Governor George Pataki talking tough about mosque surveillance and closures¹ — the first surge in Islamophobic political rhetoric occurred in September 2015.

On September 15th, during a media interview on the *Mike Gallagher Show*,² former Pennsylvanian Senator Rick Santorum explained:

“There are serious questions about Islam and the spread of Islam and how it spreads...”

Essentially, Santorum problematizes a faith tradition rather than the violent extremists who exist in every religious community.

The following day, during the *CNN* Republican debates on September 16th, Senator Graham stated:³

“Kim Davis, I’m not worried about her attacking me. I am worried about radical Islamic terrorists who are already here

¹ See “Transcript: GOP Aug. 6 undercard debate.” *Washington Post*. 6 Aug. 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/08/06/transcript-gop-aug-6-undercard-debate/>

² See “Santorum: Refugee Crisis Raises Questions About “Spread Of Islam.” *BuzzFeed News*. 15 Sept. 2015 http://www.buzzfeed.com/markarce/santorum-refugee-crisis-raises-questions-about-spread-of-isl?utm_term=.gnnKN4Py4

³ See “Full transcript: Undercard GOP debate.” *Washington Post*. 16 Sept. 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/09/16/running-transcript-undercard-gop-debate/>

planning another 9/11. We're at war, folks. I'm not fighting a crime ... young men from the Mideast are different than Kim Davis. And we've got to understand that."

Here, Graham brushstrokes an entire population — Muslim men — from Arab and/or Muslim majority countries. In truth, polling data from Pew,⁴ Zogby⁵ and the Doha Institute⁶ show strong majorities in Muslim countries — from Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates to Indonesia and Malaysia — view ISIS's extremist ideology as a perversion of Islam.

On September 18th, during a town hall meeting in Rochester, New Hampshire, a Trump supporter asked the now infamous question:⁷

"We have a problem in this country. It's called Muslims. Our current president is one ... we have training camps growing where they want to kill us ... when can we get rid of them?"

⁴ See "In nations with significant Muslim populations, much disdain for ISIS." *Pew Research Center*. 17 Nov. 2015 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/>

⁵ See "Three-Quarters of Young Middle East Muslims View Isis as 'Perversion Of Islam.'" *Newsweek*. 15 Jan. 2016 <http://www.newsweek.com/three-quarters-young-middle-east-muslims-view-isis-perversion-islam-416109>

⁶ See "The 2015 Arab Opinion Index: Results in Brief." *Doha Institute*. 21 Dec. 2015 <http://english.dohainstitute.org/content/cb12264b-1eca-402b-926a-5d068ac60011>

⁷ See "Trump doesn't challenge anti-Muslim questioner at event." *CNN*. 18 Sept. 2015 <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/17/politics/donald-trump-obama-muslim-new-hampshire/>

Trump responded: “We need this question,” smiling, and then adding, “We’re going to be looking at that ...”

Here, all Muslims are lumped together with violent terrorists and reduced to a problem or a threat. The exchange is representative of findings set forth in the Bridge Initiative’s *Super Survey Report*⁸ — a compilation of American views on Muslims and Islam from the last two decades. That research shows that at least 1 in 5 Americans reported negative views of American Muslims since 2000 (notably even preceding 9/11). It also reveals that Americans feel colder towards or more suspicious of Muslims than members of other religious groups.

When Muslims are viewed as a problem, polling data reveals approval for policies that would single them out. *The Super Survey* shows that 25% of Americans or more approve of measures like religious profiling, monitoring, internment and requiring special IDs.

Notably, Trump’s supporter in the audience also references the false rumor and popular misconception that President Obama is secretly a Muslim, a view mistakenly but widely held by 43%⁹ of Republicans around the country. This aside was not contradicted by Trump. Left standing, it reinforced the urgency of the fear among many of Trump’s fans that Muslims in the United States are attempting to take over the government and our country.

A final concerning aspect is the ambiguity in this exchange between Trump and his supporter. What is meant by “get rid of?” Are they referring to mass expulsions or something more violent? This exchange engendered substantial news media coverage. Dr. Ben Carson, whose onslaught of Islamophobic

⁸ See “The Super Survey: Two Decades of Americans’ Views on Islam & Muslims.” *The Bridge Initiative*. 19 Nov. 2015 <http://bridge.georgetown.edu/the-super-survey-two-decades-of-americans-views-on-islam-muslims/>

⁹ See “Poll: 43 percent of Republicans believe Obama is a Muslim.” *The Hill*. 13 Sept. 2015 <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/253515-poll-43-percent-of-republicans-believe-obama-is-a-muslim>

rhetoric helped him steal Mr. Trump's media spotlight, eclipsed it.

On September 20th, during an appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press*,¹⁰ Carson stated that he was opposed to a Muslim serving as president of the United States. About one week later, on September 27th, he explained on CNN's *State of the Union*¹¹ that a Muslim must "reject the tenets of Islam" if they wish to run for president. Earlier that same morning, Carson suggested on ABC's *This Week*¹² that Syrian refugees should be subject to searches because of their presumably Islamic faith. Notably, Republican presidential candidates former Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum supported Carson's position¹³ against a Muslim serving as an American president.

It is worth noting the false assumption underlying this position: the incompatibility of the Islamic faith with an American identity or Western democratic principles. Recent research from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)¹⁴ shows that there is, in fact, a positive relationship between a strong Muslim identity and a proud American identity. Essentially, ISPU found that American Muslims who describe their faith as important are actually more likely to describe their American identity as significant. This directly upends the false assumption

¹⁰ See "Ben Carson Does Not Believe a Muslim Should Be President." *NBC News*. 20 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/ben-carson-does-not-believe-muslim-should-be-president-n430431>

¹¹ See "Dr. Ben Carson on Muslims having to reject Islam in order to be president: 'You have to reject the tenets of Islam. Yes, you have to.'" *CNN*. 27 Sept. 2015 <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2015/09/27/dr-ben-carson-on-muslims-having-to-reject-islam-in-order-to-be-president-you-have-to-reject-the-tenets-of-islam-yes-you-have-to/>

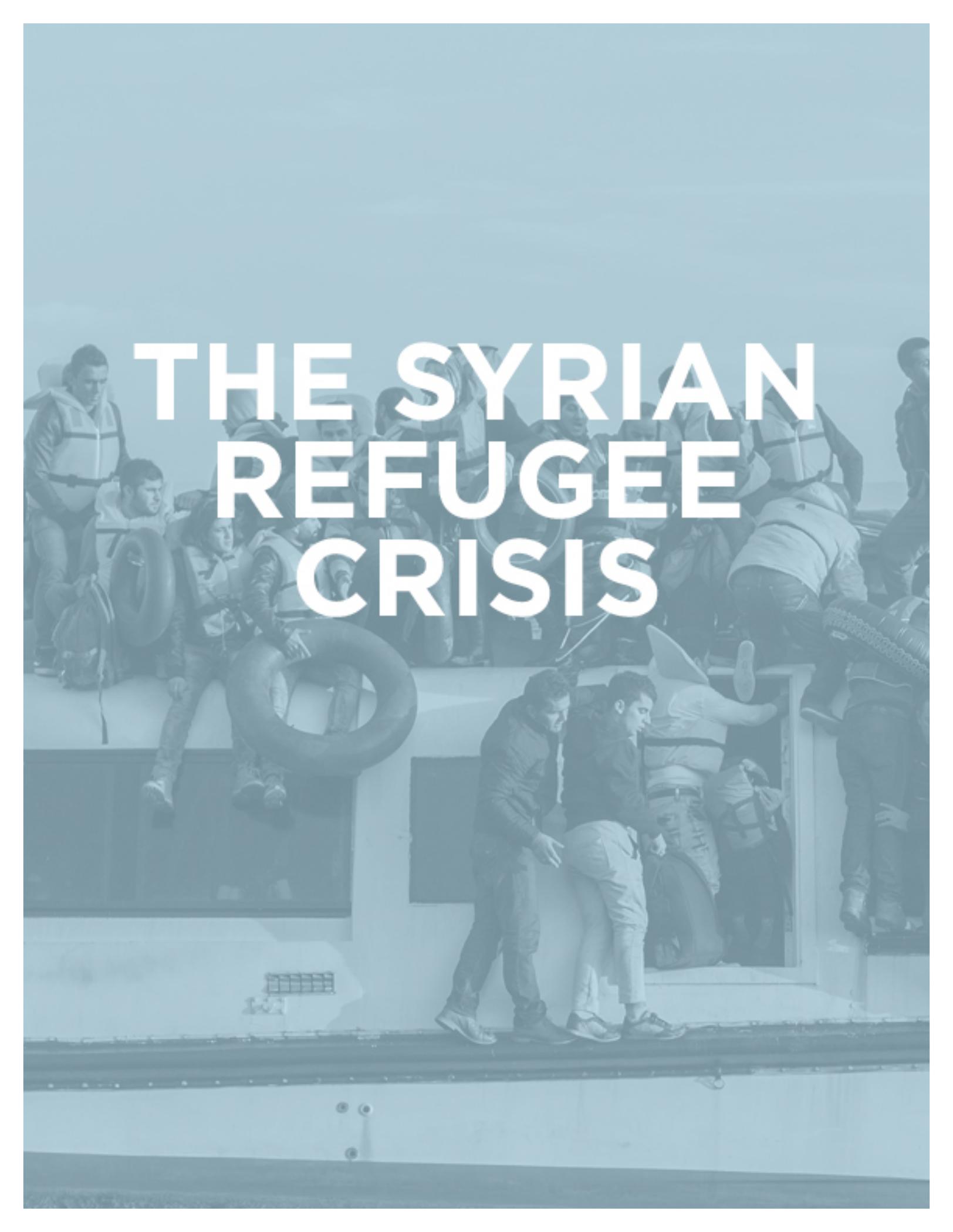
¹² See "'This Week' Transcript: Dr. Ben Carson and Samantha Power." *ABC News*. 27 Sept. 2015 <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/week-transcript-dr-ben-carson-samantha-power/story?id=34065285>

¹³ See "Bobby Jindal Would Vote For A Muslim Candidate If He Strongly Resembled A Christian." *Huffington Post*. 21 Sept. 2015 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bobby-jindal-vote-for-muslim_us_56002233e4b00310edf7c308; "Mickelson in the Morning: Life and Death." *WHO Radio*. 22 Sept. 2015 <http://whoradio.heart.com/onair/mickelson-in-the-morning-7738/life-and-death-13967351/>

¹⁴ "The American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections." *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding*. March 2016 <http://www.ispu.org/poll>

underlying the ban against an American Muslim president,
supported by Dr. Carson and others.





THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

As noted, the election season's first surge in Islamophobic political rhetoric came in September 2015.

But why then?

We turned to *The New York Times* for related insight. After all, there had not been a terrorist attack on American or even European soil at that time. Was there a subject or theme dominating news headlines that might provide the necessary context? In our search for understanding, we stumbled upon the Syrian refugee crisis.

By surveying the *Times* headlines during September 2015, we identified the following news stories:

SEPTEMBER 2nd

*"Migrant Crises Gives Germany Familiar Role in Another European Drama"*¹

SEPTEMBER 3rd

*"Migrant Chaos Mounts While Divided Europe Stumbles for Response"*²

SEPTEMBER 4th

*"Migrants Cross Austria Border from Hungary"*³ and *"Exodus of Syrians Highlights Political Failure of the West"*⁴

¹ See "Migrant Crises Gives Germany Familiar Role in Another European Drama." *New York Times*. 2 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/03/world/europe/germany-migrant-crisis.html>

² See "Migrant Chaos Mounts While Divided Europe Stumbles for Response." *New York Times*. 3 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/04/world/europe/hungary-train-station-migrant-crisis.html>

³ See "Migrants Cross Austria Border from Hungary." *New York Times*. 4 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/05/world/europe/migrant-crisis-hungary.html>

⁴ See "Exodus of Syrians Highlights Political Failure of the West." *New York Times*. 4 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/05/world/middleeast/exodus-of-syrians-highlights-political-failure-of-the-west.html>

SEPTEMBER 5th

*"Germans Welcome Migrants After Long Journey Through Hungary and Austria"*⁵

SEPTEMBER 7th

*"Migrants Who Survived Shipwreck Are Grateful, but Disillusioned"*⁶

SEPTEMBER 8th

*"A New Wave of Migrants Flees Iraq, Yearning for Europe"*⁷

SEPTEMBER 9th

*"EU Nations Urged to Accept 160,000 Migrants"*⁸

SEPTEMBER 11th

*"Empathy and Angst in a German City Transformed by Refugees"*⁹

SEPTEMBER 12th

*"Eastern Bloc's Resistance to Refugees Highlights Europe's Cultural and Political Divisions"*¹⁰

SEPTEMBER 14th

*"More Border Controls as Europe Stalls on Migrant Quotas"*¹¹

⁵ See "Germans Welcome Migrants After Long Journey Through Hungary and Austria." *New York Times*. 5 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/06/world/europe/migrant-crisis-austria-hungary-germany.html>

⁶ See "Migrants Who Survived Shipwreck Are Grateful, but Disillusioned." *New York Times*. 7 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/08/world/europe/migrants-europe-lampedusa-sinking.html>

⁷ See "A New Wave of Migrants Flees Iraq, Yearning for Europe." *New York Times*. 8 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/world/middleeast/iraq-migrants-refugees-europe.html>

⁸ See "EU Nations Urged to Accept 160,000 Migrants." *New York Times*. 9 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/10/world/europe/europe-migrant-crisis-jean-claude-juncker.html>

⁹ See "Empathy and Angst in a German City Transformed by Refugees." *New York Times*. 11 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/12/world/europe/empathy-and-angst-in-a-german-city-transformed-by-migrants.html>

¹⁰ See "Eastern Bloc's Resistance to Refugees Highlights Europe's Cultural and Political Divisions." *New York Times*. 12 Sept. 2015 "Eastern Bloc's Resistance to Refugees Highlights Europe's Cultural and Political Divisions"

¹¹ See "More Border Controls as Europe Stalls on Migrant Quotas." *New York Times*. 14 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/15/world/europe/europe-migrant-crisis.html>

SEPTEMBER 20th

*"US Will Accept More Refugees as Crisis Grows"*¹²

SEPTEMBER 22nd

*"Plan on Migrants Strains the Limits of Europe's Unity"*¹³

SEPTEMBER 26th

*"Money Flows with Refugees, and Life Jackets Fill the Shops"*¹⁴

The public discourse surrounding concerns about the Syrian refugee crisis quickly devolved into Islamophobic rhetoric about an influx of terrorists entering the United States under the guise of being refugees. This discourse may have contributed to a generalized fear and suspicion of Islam and Muslims that led some politicians, including GOP presidential candidates, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Texan Senator Ted Cruz, to call for only admitting Christian refugees into the country.¹⁵ It was in this context that Santorum reflected upon the spread of Islam and Carson stated, "I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation. I absolutely would not agree with that."

During the surge of September 2015, there were approximately ten (10) reported incidents or threats of violence, including three (3) murders. In comparison, there was only one (1) such incident in August 2015. This represents a significant increase in anti-Muslim violence with nine (9) times as many incidents. While this may seem like a trivial number, in the lives of American Muslims, one act or threat of violence — such as a

¹² See "US Will Accept More Refugees as Crisis Grows." *New York Times*. 20 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/europe/us-to-increase-admission-of-refugees-to-100000-in-2017-kerry-says.html>

¹³ See "Plan on Migrants Strains the Limits of Europe's Unity." *New York Times*. 22 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/23/world/europe/european-union-ministers-migrants-refugees.html>

¹⁴ See "Money Flows with Refugees, and Life Jackets Fill the Shops." *New York Times*. 26 Sept. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/world/middleeast/money-flows-with-refugees-and-life-jackets-fill-the-shops.html>

¹⁵ See Nuzzi, Olivia. "Jeb Bush & Ted Cruz Only Want to Save Christians". *The Daily Beast*. 16 Nov 2015 <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/11/16/jeb-cruz-only-want-to-save-christians.html>

murder, physical attack, shooting or bombing – is likely one too many.





**TRUMP-INSPIRED
VIOLENCE**

TRUMP-INSPIRED VIOLENCE

One of the recent narratives that has emerged about Mr. Trump concerns the violence that surrounds him. In February 2016, he stated¹ in Nevada that he wanted to punch a protester in the face; in March he cancelled² a Chicago rally because of violence that broke out between protestors and supporters, including a CBS news reporter who was thrown to the ground;³ protestors were hurt outside a Kansas City rally;⁴ and the candidate threatened⁵ Democratic presidential candidate and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders on Twitter.

Still, the first known victim of Trump-inspired violence emerged much earlier. On August 20, 2015, in Boston, Massachusetts, two Trump supporters physically attacked a homeless Latino man.⁶ One of the attackers informed police that he was motivated by Trump's immigration message that Mexicans were criminals and rapists. At some point after learning of the attack, Trump downplayed the event in his retort that his supporters were merely "very passionate."⁷ On a separate and disconcerting note, the attackers had previously been convicted of an anti-Muslim hate crime.

¹ See "Donald Trump on protester: 'I'd like to punch him in the face.'" *CNN*. 23 Feb. 2016 <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/23/politics/donald-trump-nevada-rally-punch/>

² See "Trump supporters, protesters clash after Chicago rally postponed." 12 March 2016 <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/11/politics/donald-trump-chicago-protests/>

³ See "CBS News journalist caught in turmoil at canceled Donald Trump rally." *CBS News*. 12 March 2016 <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-chicago-canceled-rally-cbs-news-journalist-captured-tensions-before-arrest/>

⁴ See "Police Use Pepper Spray to Disperse Protesters Outside Trump Rally in Kansas City." *New York Times*. 12 March 2016 <http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/03/12/police-use-pepper-spray-to-disperse-protesters-outside-trump-rally-in-kansas-city/>

⁵ See "'Be careful Bernie': Trump threatens to send supporters to Sanders rallies." *Washington Post*. 13 March 2016 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/03/13/donald-trump-says-bernie-sanders-should-be-careful-or-hell-send-supporters-to-his-events/>

⁶ See "2 Brothers Inspired by Donald Trump Allegedly Attack Homeless Hispanic Man." *Mother Jones*. 20 Aug. 2015 <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2015/08/donald-trump-hispanic-man-attack-boston>

⁷ See "Trump says fans are 'very passionate' after hearing one of them allegedly assaulted Hispanic man." *Washington Post*. 21 Aug. 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/08/21/trump-says-fans-are-very-passionate-after-hearing-one-of-them-allegedly-assaulted-hispanic-man/>

If the first surge in anti-Muslim political rhetoric occurred in September 2015 and in the context of an escalating refugee crises, Islamophobia reached a fever pitch in November 2015, in the wake of the November 15th Paris terrorist attacks and then the mass shootings in San Bernardino, California on December 2nd that same year. In the wake of those events, Islamophobic political vitriol intensified particularly from Mr. Trump.

In an *MSNBC* interview,⁸ Trump stated that he would “strongly consider” closing mosques as part of his counter-terrorism strategy. On *Fox News*,⁹ Trump doubled-down on his position, explaining that “some bad things are happening and a lot of them are happening in the mosque...” In a *Yahoo! News*¹⁰ interview, he refused to rule out special IDs, warrantless surveillance and searches and a database for American Muslims. In a telephone interview with *ABC's This Week*¹¹ program, Trump insisted that he saw footage of New Jersey Muslims cheering the September 11th attacks. During an interview with *Fox News*,¹² he criticized President Obama's first visit to an American mosque and appeared to call his faith beliefs into question by stating, “I think that we can go to lots of places. I don't know, maybe he feels comfortable there... We have a lot of problems in this country ... there are a lot of places he can go and he chose a mosque.” On *CNN*,¹³ Trump explained to Anderson Cooper that “Islam hates us...” He later claimed in an appearance on *Fox News Sunday*¹⁴ that 27% of Muslims are “very militant.”

⁸ See “Donald Trump: ‘Strongly consider’ shutting mosques.” *CNN*. 16 Nov. 2015

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/16/politics/donald-trump-paris-attacks-close-mosques/>

⁹ See “Trump Doubles Down On Closing Mosques: ‘We’re Gonna Have No Choice’ (VIDEO).” *Talking Points Memo*. 18 Nov. 2015. <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/donald-trump-sean-hannity-mosque-closing>

¹⁰ See “Donald Trump has big plans for ‘radical Islamic’ terrorists, 2016 and ‘that communist’ Bernie Sanders.” *Yahoo! News*. 19 Nov. 2015 <https://www.yahoo.com/news/donald-trump-has-big-plans-1303117537878070.html>

¹¹ See “Donald Trump Again Says He Saw Cheering in New Jersey on 9/11.” *ABC News*. 22 Nov. 2015 <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donald-trump-cheering-jersey-911/story?id=35355447>

¹² See “Trump on Obama mosque visit: ‘Maybe he feels comfortable there.’” *CNN*. 3 Feb. 2016 <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/03/politics/donald-trump-barack-obama-mosque/>

¹³ See “Donald Trump: ‘I think Islam hates us.’” *CNN*. 10 March 2016

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/09/politics/donald-trump-islam-hates-us/>

¹⁴ See “Can Donald Trump unify a Republican Party he fractured?.” *FOX News*. 13 March 2016 <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2016/03/13/can-donald-trump-unify-republican-party-fractured/>

Recent ISPU research, *The American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections*,¹⁵ undermines the false assumptions informing Trump's mosque concerns. It shows that American Muslim mosque goers are more likely to be civically engaged. Radicalization and terrorist recruitment is happening more frequently online and not at the mosque, although law enforcement surveillance tactics targeting mosques ignore this important fact and might, then, lend more credence to unsubstantiated fear of American mosques and the ordinary American Muslims who attend them.

The role of the news media in the dissemination of Trump's Islamophobia is also considerable.

Trump is not just spreading anti-Muslim views to hundreds or thousands of supporters at campaign events. As illustrated above, he is spreading anti-Muslim bigotry through mainstream media outlets, reaching millions across the country and around the world.¹⁶

In fact, research shows that Trump has received the equivalent of \$1.9 billion¹⁷ in television coverage while only having spent \$10 million in paid advertising. Since announcing his candidacy in June 2015, he has been the lead news story 36% of the time.¹⁸

¹⁵ "The American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections," *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding*, March 2016 <http://www.ispu.org/poll>

¹⁶ See "A Belgian minister said Muslims 'danced' after terror attacks. Now he's facing questions," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 2016,

¹⁷ See "The Mutual Dependence of Donald Trump and the News Media," *New York Times*, 20 March 2016 <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/21/business/media/the-mutual-dependence-of-trump-and-the-news-media.html>

¹⁸ See "How Trump Hacked The Media," *FiveThirtyEight*, 30 March 2016 <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-donald-trump-hacked-the-media/>

Significantly, as Trump discussed shutting down mosques, anti-Muslim hate crimes (a disproportionate number of which targeted mosques) tripled.¹⁹ In fact, in November 2015, there were thirty-five (35) incidents of anti-Muslim violence. Of course, this escalation in anti-Muslim violence followed the Paris terrorist attacks and the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California that same year.

Anti-Muslim attacks escalated in the month of December 2015. There were approximately 53 total attacks, seventeen (17) of which targeted mosques and five (5) of which targeted Muslim homes. By comparison, when the presidential election season began just nine (9) months earlier, there were only two (2) attacks. Attacks on and threats against American Muslims during this month constitute approximately 1/3 of all attacks last year. In fact, in December 2015, anti-Muslim attacks occurred almost daily and often multiple times a day.

As noted, in a number of instances, the attackers were children or youth.²⁰ For example, during the election season, a nineteen-year-old college student physically attacked a Muslim mother dining with her nine-year-old daughter at a restaurant in Bloomington, Indiana; several twelve-year-old students physically assaulted a sixth-grade Muslim schoolmate during recess, punching her and calling her "ISIS" in the Bronx, New York; a seventeen-year-old threatened and ran over a Sikh man in Fresno, California; and a seventh-grader threatened to shoot a Muslim student as they rode the school bus together in Vandalia, Ohio.

A number of American Muslim community leaders and activists have attributed the escalation in anti-Muslim violence to candidates' mainstreaming of Islamophobia while citing Trump specifically. For instance, on December 10th, a mosque in Coachella Valley, California was firebombed and threatened telephonically. Its imam cited Trump's Islamophobic political

¹⁹ See "Hate Crimes And Backlash Against Muslim-Americans Have Tripled In Wake Of Paris And San Bernardino Attacks." *International Business Times*. 19 Dec. 2015 <http://www.ibtimes.com/hate-crimes-backlash-against-muslim-americans-have-tripled-wake-paris-san-bernardino-2233545>

²⁰ Youth is defined as ages fifteen to twenty-four.

rhetoric. Several days later, on December 14th, in Cooper City, Florida, someone vandalized Nur-Ul-Islam Academy with the following message, “[Expletive] Muslims.” The school’s officials cited Trump’s political rhetoric.

And, they are not alone in their suspicions. In a speech delivered on February 3rd, during his first visit to an American mosque, President Obama stated, *“You’ve seen too often people conflating the horrific acts of terrorism with the beliefs of an entire faith. Of course recently we’ve heard inexcusable political rhetoric against Muslim Americans that has no place in our country. **No surprise then that threats and harassment of Muslim Americans have surged.**”*

Whether Islamophobic political rhetoric actually incited or caused violence can be difficult to prove. But, not so in cases such as the homeless Latino man whose attackers cited Trump’s statements as their inspiration. It is important to note that American Muslims’ suspicions were confirmed in March 2016. In Kansas City, Khondoher Usama²¹ stopped by a Kwik Stop near Wichita State University campus for fuel and snacks together with a friend.

That’s when they were attacked by a man who shouted, “brown trash,” “Trump will win,” “We will make America great again,” and “Trump, Trump, Trump.”

There were two victims at the Kwik Stop that day – an American Muslim and a Latino who was not. The attacker didn’t distinguish between them. Neither had the brothers who assaulted the homeless Latino man in August 2015. The

²¹ “‘Trump! Trump! Trump!’ attacker allegedly yelled as he beat Hispanic man, Muslim student.” *Washington Post*, 14 March 2016 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/03/14/trump-trump-trump-yells-attacker-as-he-beats-hispanic-man-muslim-student/>

brothers had both been previously convicted of an anti-Muslim hate crime.

These two attacks are bookends on a year in which the rate of Islamophobic attacks remain higher than pre- 9/11 levels. Before and after terrorist attacks, American Muslims have been consistently and increasingly singled out in a growingly hostile, increasingly violent atmosphere of anti-Muslim sentiment. Irresponsible statements by presidential candidates, especially Ben Carson, Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, have only contributed to the tension and fear that have spurred violence against a vulnerable American minority group. Rather than urge calm and encourage unity in the wake of terrorist attacks – in Paris, San Bernardino and most recently, Brussels—that hurt Muslims and non-Muslims alike, Trump and Cruz have suggested, and stood by, policies to ban Muslims from entering the United States and patrol so-called “Muslim neighborhoods,” respectively.





CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Research shows that nine (9) out of ten (10) stories by news media outlets located in the U.S., U.K. and Germany portray Islam and Muslims in the context of violence: terrorists or warlords. Still, our report demonstrates that Muslims in America are in fact the *victims* of myriad acts or threats of violence on a regular — and, at times, daily — basis. Still, the dehumanization¹ of this minority faith group at best prevents Americans from viewing Muslims through an empathetic lens. At worst, it leads to their violent victimization. Our analysis reveals that this is particularly true for Muslim men and youth.

While this report focuses on anti-Muslim violence in the 2016 presidential election season, it is significant to also note the expressions of interfaith solidarity² from the larger community when Muslims confront violence. Representative is the interfaith response to the anti-Muslim hate crime against the headquarter offices of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) — the largest Muslim organization in America — located in Plainfield, Indiana. In February 2016, vandals defaced the building’s brick walls with racial epithets and anti-Muslim vulgarities. In response, hundreds of non-Muslims stood shoulder-to-shoulder with ISNA officials to condemn the attack and to call for a state law criminalizing such bias attacks.

In conclusion, this report comes approximately six (6) months in advance of the general elections in November 2016. On April 26th, Mr. Trump declared himself the “presumptive nominee”³ in the Republican race following decisive victories in five primaries. Within days, at a campaign event in California, he

¹ See Americans See Muslims as Less than Human, *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/18/americans-see-muslims-as-less-than-human-no-wonder-ahmed-was-arrested/>.

² The report’s addendum includes a number of examples.

³ “Trump declares himself presumptive nominee after Tuesday Wins,” April 27, 2016, *NBC News*, <http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/donald-trump-declares-himself-presumptive-nominee-after-tuesday-wins-n563241>.

retold the factually inaccurate tale of General John Pershing engaging in a mass shooting of Muslims with bullets dipped in pig's blood.⁴ Local police officers later made twenty (20) arrests as violence erupted between Trump supporters and protesters.⁵ Around this time, in Washington, D.C., a Trump supporter insulted an American Muslim woman⁶ as "f***ing Muslim trash" outside a Starbucks. The attacker then poured an unidentified liquid over her head. This signifies the third bias attack by Trump supporters since the election season kicked off in March 2015.

What lies ahead?

⁴ See "Trump Repeats False Pig's Blood Story at California Rally," *TIME*, April 29, 2016, <http://time.com/4312131/donald-trump-pigs-blood-muslim-story/>.

⁵ See "Violence Erupts After California Trump Rally, Columbia Daily Tribune," April 29, 2016, http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/violence-erupts-after-california-trump-rally-about-arrested/article_4152b031-cc51-514f-b663-d3c347a4618f.html.

⁶ "Muslim woman attacked by Trump Supporter," *Hate Hurts*, April 30, 2016, <https://hatehurts.net/2016/04/30/muslim-woman-attacked-by-trump-supporter-liquid-poured-on-her-head/>

ADDENDUM: THE DATA

On March 23rd, 2015, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) announced his candidacy for high office thus formally inaugurating the 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle.

On March 25, 2015, two Lebanese men shot and killed in Houston, TX.

On April 1st, Sudanese refugees in Anchorage, Alaska found their cars vandalized with hateful messages such as “Leave Alaska,” “Get Out” and “Go Now.”

On April 3th, in Kansas City, Kansas, a young man and woman spray painted the Islamic Society of Greater Kansas City with devil worshipping symbols and profanity. Federal and local law enforcement officials opened an investigation.

On April 7th, in Los Angeles, California, vandal defaced an Occidental College student group’s chalk memorial remembering Palestinians who died last summer with the following inscription, “Not all Muslims are terrorists, but most terrorists are Muslim today.” Someone then crossed out the message with the word “No” scribbled beside it. The student group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), submitted a bias incident report to college officials.

On April 7th, Rand Paul declares his candidacy for high office.

On April 9th, Donald Trump visits with participants in CAIR Iowa Muslim Day at the Capitol.

On April 9th, in Irving, Texas, local law enforcement increase patrols around the Islamic Center of Irving after the mosque and private school received threatening emails, letters and phone calls.

On April 10th, in Tempe, Arizona, anti-Muslim protesters yelled insults at mosque worshipers and desecrated the Quran at the Islamic Community Center of Tempe.

The following week, on April 17th, a coalition of 56 interfaith leaders condemned the harassment.

On April 12th, in Edmond, Oklahoma, someone left pork at the parking lot and entrance to the Islamic Society of Edmond, before children arrived for their weekly Sunday school session. Someone shattered the windows to another area mosque in Stillwater, Oklahoma with a BB gun. And, that same day in Portland, Oregon, a Muslim business that sells halal goods was vandalized with graffiti.

On April 13th, Senator Marco Rubio declares his candidacy for high office.

On April 19, in Lexington, Kentucky, Salahuddin Jitmoud, 22, was murdered outside an apartment building in what his faith community fear was a hate crime.

On April 28th, in Baltimore, Maryland, the Islamic Society of Baltimore, where a private school is housed, received a bomb threat.

On May 4th, Dr. Ben Carson declares his candidacy for high office.

On May 4th, a Muslim man was physically assaulted outside his local mosque, the Islamic Association of North Texas in Richardson.

On May 5th, Mike Huckabee declares his candidacy for high office.

On May 5th, in Baltimore, Maryland, someone threatened the Islamic Society of Baltimore “to spill Muslim blood.”

On May 1st, in Troy, Michigan, a 53-year-old inebriated man threatened to kill two 7-Eleven employees while physically attacking them because of their Muslim faith identity. One of the workers suffered head and facial injuries from the attack.

On May 9th, in a Sirius XM Patriot interview in Greenville, South Carolina, Republican Presidential candidate Ben Carson fields a question about whether we are fighting a global war on terrorism or radical Islam. He responds, "I think we are fighting radical Islam. There is no question about it. They have the same goal as they did when Mohammed was around. They want to dominate. And they want everyone else to submit to them."

On May 14th, in Lubbock, Texas, the school seal of the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center was vandalized with the words, "No Muslims."

On May 22th, in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, a member of a neighborhood targeted a Muslim couple in their 50s who were waiting in their car in front of a friend's home. The woman, who was later arrested, pounded the car windows while aiming an apparent gun in their direction and yelled, "get out of the car or I'll shoot." The wife wears a hijab.

On May 25th, Phoenix, Arizona and Tempe mosques received letters quoting the Bible and threatening to kill religious leaders and their families. The letters also state, "I can see entire muslim [sic] communities destroyed from Detroit to California."

Also on May 25th, in Midland Park, New Jersey, someone defaced the Elzahra Islamic Center entrance sign with a swastika.

On May 27th, in Pennsylvania, a bumper sticker reads, "Promote World Peace, Kill a Muslim."

On May 27th, Rick Santorum declares candidacy for high office.

On May 27th, in an appearance on the *Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, Republican presidential candidate discussed his opposition to a mosque construction project near the site of the September 11 attacks. He explained, “When they told me that they were going to build a mosque at 9/11 [sic], I was horrified and thought that was a terrible thing. But I’m not for a law to prevent them. If you want to march down the street and you’re a part of the KKK, I’m horrified by that, and object to it. But there are certain — the first amendment is about the right to be despicable.”

On May 27th, Rick Santorum declares his candidacy.

On May 28th, former Governor George Pataki declares his candidacy.

On May 29th, in Phoenix, Arizona, an armed biker gang protested outside a local area mosque, the Islamic Community Center in Phoenix. In advance, the organizer called participants “to utilize there [sic] second amendment right at this event just in case our first amendment comes under the much anticipated attack.” Protestors – upwards of 200 - tore up the Quran, called Islam a “religion of murderers,” and carried semi-automatic weapons. Police in riot gear, including gas masks, were present.

On June 1st, Senator Lindsey Graham declares candidacy for high office.

On June 16th, Donald Trump declares his candidacy for high office.

On June 17th, in Columbia, Missouri, a man in his vehicle circled around a group of Muslim men walking to a local mosque while hurling Islamophobic obscenities. After circling the group four times, he punched one of the men through the driver’s side window and then sped away.

On June 22nd, in Phoenix, Arizona, a Muslim family whose home was burglarized was also set ablaze. Local police did not suspect a hate crime.

On June 24th, on the U.S Senate floor in Washington, D.C., Republican presidential hopeful Senator Lindsey Graham reflected on the attack on a black church in Charleston, South Carolina. He stated, "I don't know how you can sit with somebody for an hour in a church and pray with them and get up and shoot them. That's Mideast hate. That's something I didn't think we had here, but apparently we do."

On June 24th, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a Muslim-owned house was vandalized with graffiti including, "f**k Muslim" and "You will be killed here."

On June 24th, Senator Marco Rubio declares candidacy for high office.

On June 24th, Governor Bobby Jindal declares candidacy for high office.

On June 26th, in Houston, Texas, Ziad Abu Naim, 42, was killed in a road rage shooting where the gunman shouted, "Go back to Islam."

On July 1st, in North Brunswick, New Jersey, a South Asian man was found on the side of the road, bleeding from the head after a bias attack. He was one of a number of Asian Indian victims who were targeted in a series of violent attacks.

On July 2nd, in Paterson, New Jersey, the Islamic Center of Passaic County received a swatting hoax. After someone telephoned the local authorities that there was an armed gunman at the mosque, SWAT teams and bomb-disabling robots arrived at the center, conducted extensive sweeps and left with nothing more. The hoax came in the midst of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

On July 4th, in Spokane, Washington, the exterior of the Bosnia Herzegovina Heritage Association building, was vandalized with graffiti stating, "Death to Islam." Muslims used the building for communal prayer during the holy month of Ramadan.

On July 5th, in Chico, California, the Fusion Hookah Lounge was set ablaze after two men drove by yelling threatening comments. The owners described finding a Molotov cocktail at the site of the fire but investigators stated that there was no sign of a hate crime.

On July 6th, in West York, Pennsylvania, a bar's outdoors sign stating, "Death to Islam," helps increase business.

On July 11th, in Manhattan, a 19-year-old Muslim woman adorned in Muslim attire sustained a fractured jaw after a bias attack requiring her to undergo surgery. The perpetrator yelled anti-Muslim slurs after he overheard her speaking in the Urdu language.

On July 13th, in Manassas, Virginia, a local area mosque was vandalized with worshippers inside. The copper cables to two air conditioner units had been cut.

On July 13th, Scott Walker declares his candidacy.

On July 15th, in Farmersville, Texas, the Islamic Association of Collin County threatened with desecration of proposed Muslim cemetery with pig's heads and blood.

On July 16th, in Chattanooga, Tennessee a mentally unstable man who self-identified as Muslim attacked and killed four Marines in Tennessee. The local Muslim community cancelled Eid celebrations to mourn with the victims' families.

On July 17th, in an official statement, Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz argues that there is no such thing as a "lone gunman" in reference to the Chattanooga shootings, which he characterized as "jihad."

On July 17th, in Manassas, Virginia, local area mosque is vandalized for second time in same week.

On July 20th, in Moline, Illinois, a window at the Islamic Center of the Quad Cities, was shattered while Muslims worshipped inside.

On July 25th, in Roanoke, Virginia, the glass in Masjid An Nur Islamic Center's front doors were shattered and worshippers were subject to obscenities and accusations that they were "terrorists" by neighbors.

On July 25th, in Johnson City, Tennessee, the Muslim Community Center of Northeast Tennessee received an online threat of arson.

On August 6th, at the Republican presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio, Governor Bobby Jindal stated, "How can we beat an enemy if our commander-in-chief doesn't have the moral honesty and clarity to say that Islam has a problem, and that problem is radical Islam." Additionally, former Governor Pataki and Senator Lindsey Graham both indicated that they would monitor and shut down mosques as part of their counter-terrorism strategy.

In the same debate, Graham said, "You want to see a war on women? Come with me to Iraq and Afghanistan, folks, I've been there 35 times. I'll show you what they do to women." Graham uses the vague word "they," implying that typical, ordinary men in Muslim-majority countries like Iraq and Afghanistan mistreat women. This comment plays into the centuries-old Islamophobic trope of the barbaric Muslim man oppressing the disenfranchised woman.

On August 8th, in Detroit, Michigan, during the Republican Presidential debate, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina appeared to advocate for religious profiling when he stated "If I have to monitor a mosque, I'll monitor a mosque."

On August 8th, in Marietta, Georgia, a National Guard soldier was arrested for making up a terrorist threat against U.S. soldiers that referenced Islam's Prophet Mohammed. It was initially believed that the perpetrators were Muslim.

On August 18th, advocacy group publicizes FBI bulletin warns that militias may begin targeting Muslim institutions such as mosques and community centers in Alaska, Arizona, Indiana, Montana, New York, North and South Carolina, Utah, and Texas.

On August 21st, during a campaign event in Derby, New Hampshire, Republican presidential candidate Governor Scott Walker acknowledged that there are a "handful of reasonable, moderate followers of Islam."

On August 22, in Omaha, Nebraska, a vandal broke the window at the Islamic Center of Omaha; others were filmed throwing stones.

On September 3th, in Waterport, New York, two crosses were burned into the lawn of a local mosque.

On September 7th, in Laguna Niguel, California, an Iranian American college student is murdered by white supremacists. On that same day, in Palmetto, Florida, two young American Muslim men, who happened to be brothers, are shot and killed at a convenience store.

On September 10th, in Chicago, Illinois, a Sikh American was physically attacked while called a "terrorist" and "Bin Laden." The 53-year-old victim suffered a fractured cheekbone, lacerations and other injuries.

On September 11th, in Sterling Heights, Michigan, protestors jeered and spat on Muslims leaving a public hearing on a new mosque construction project.

On September 15th, during an interview on *The Mike Gallagher Show*, Republican presidential candidate and former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum stated that “There are serious questions here about Islam and the spread of Islam and how it spreads and, again, because the administration refuses to acknowledge that Islam has anything to do with anything, we can’t even have a discussion about why we’re taking only Muslims here in the United States.”

On September 16th, in Louisville, Kentucky, the Louisville Islamic Center was spray-painted with obscenities, “Moslems – leave the Jews alone,” “This is for France” and with a Jewish Star of David.

On September 16th, during the CNN Republican debate, Republican presidential candidate Lindsey Graham stated, “Kim Davis, I’m not worried about her attacking me,” Graham said at the debate. “I am worried about radical Islamic terrorists who are already here planning another 9/11. We’re at war, folks. I’m not fighting a crime ...Young men from the Mideast are different than Kim Davis. And we’ve got to understand that.”

On September 17th, in Murray, Kentucky, Hijab Day posters at Murray State University were vandalized with statements such as, “Hey want to find out what it’s like to be flogged? Stoned, too?” and “Bad joke!”

On September 18th, at a town hall in Rochester, New Hampshire, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was asked by a supporter, “We have a problem in this country. It’s called Muslims. Our current president is one. We know he’s not even an American.” He added, “We have training camps growing where they want to kill us. That’s my question: When can we get rid of them?” Trump did not challenge the anti-Muslim questioner. Rather, he responded, “A lot of people are saying that and a lot of people are saying that bad things are happening out there. We’re going to be looking at that and a lot of different things.”

On September 20th, during an interview with NBC's *Meet the Press*, Republican Presidential Candidate Ben Carson states "I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation. I absolutely would not agree with that." He added that the Islamic faith is inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution.

On September 21st, in an official statement, GOP presidential candidate Bobby Jindal responds reflects on Carson's position with a hypothetical, "If you can find me a Muslim candidate who is a Republican, who will fight hard to protect religious liberty, who will respect the Judeo-Christian heritage of America, who will be committed to destroying ISIS and radical Islam, who will condemn cultures that treat women as second class citizens and who will place their hand on the Bible and swear to uphold the Constitution, then yes, I will be happy to consider voting for him or her."

On September 22nd, during an Iowa radio interview, Republican Presidential hopeful Rick Santorum stated that he supports Carson's position against devout Muslims holding high office.

On September 24th, in Parma, Ohio, someone approaches an official with the Islamic Center of Cleveland and asks about joining the mosque so he could "molest children."

On September 24th, in Miami, Florida, worshippers at the Islamic School of Miami found a ceramic skull on top of the mosque's entrance sign and a wooden cross with the American flag on a donation box. A few weeks earlier, on the anniversary of September 11th, a bag filled with books supporting ISIS together with a cable wire were found on the mosque's grounds.

On September 27th, in an appearance on CNN's "State of the Union," Republican Presidential hopeful Ben Carson explained that in order for a Muslim to hold high office, "You have to reject the tenets of Islam."

On September 28th, during an appearance on ABC's *This Week*, Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson stated he "would certainly be willing to listen to somebody" argue that the religion of Middle Eastern refugees should be considered probable cause for searches of emails or cell phone calls.

On October 1st, in a radio interview with Hugh Hewitt, Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson stated that he would be open to a Muslim Supreme Court Justice so long as they do not follow the "lifestyle" of Islam "which incorporates sharia."

On October 7th, in Richardson, Texas, a man made alarming comments to his family about the Islamic Association of North Texas. His family reported the threats to local law enforcement officials.

On October 5th, during a campaign event in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Republican Presidential hopeful Marco Rubio stated, "What President Obama is proposing to do, bring tens of thousands of Syrian Muslims to America, is nothing short of crazy... It would be the height of foolishness to bring in tens of thousands of people, including jihadists who are coming here to murder innocent Americans ...With respect to the refugees, it is a humanitarian crisis, but they ought to be settled in the Middle East, in majority Muslim countries."

On October 10th, "Global Rally for Humanity," a hate group, targets mosques for anti-Muslim rallies around the country including in Charleston, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Dearborn, Michigan; and Phoenix, Arizona. Three of the ensuing demonstrations – in Arizona, Michigan and Florida – include armed protestors. DHS, FBI and DOJ host community safety call in advance of the rallies.

On October 9th, in Washington, D.C., Republican Presidential Candidate Ben Carson questions loyalties of American Muslims during a discussion on constitutional liberties at the National Press Club.

On October 12th, in Katy, Texas, vandals shattered the glass door of Masjid Al-Ahad. Activists cited national hate campaign targeting mosques and anti-Muslim political vitriol by public officials as contributing factors.

On October 17th, in Bloomington, Indiana, an Indiana University student attacked a Muslim women dining with her 9-year-old daughter at a local restaurant. The 19-year-old perpetrator yelled “white power” and “kill them all” prior to slamming the victim’s head into the table while attempting to remove her hijab.

On October 19th, in Seattle, Washington, a building that housed a local mosque set on fire.

On October 20st, in Sparta, Tennessee, a Tennessee school board member received death threats in connection to a statewide social studies curriculum that teaches about the Islamic faith.

On October 22nd, during an appearance on Fox Business Network, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump responded to a question about whether he would close mosques as part of his counter-terrorism strategy by stating, “I would do that, absolutely.”

On October 22rd, in Brooklyn, New York, two brothers stabbed a Muslim man who was speaking Arabic to his wife and young son during a neighborhood walk. One of the attackers allegedly stated, “I’m going to stab you because you’re Arabic and deserve it.”

On October 28th, at a George Mason University town hall in Northern Virginia, Democratic Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders vowed to end all forms of racism, including Islamophobia.

On October 29th, in Omaha, Nebraska, the local area mosque was vandalized a second time.

On October 30th in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a Muslim woman was beaten, told to “speaking English.”

On November 1st, in Burlington, Mass., the Islamic Center of Burlington was spray-painted with “USA.” That mosque had been previously vandalized two years earlier also with “USA” graffiti. Muslim activists cite the mainstreaming of Islamophobia.

On November 5th, in Northern Virginia, Virginia Tech police warned students about a threat to kill all Muslims. They cited graffiti left inside a bathroom stall that stated, “I will be here 11/11/2015 to kill all Muslims (sic).”

On November 6th, in Coon Rapids, Minneapolis, a woman attacked a Muslim woman dining with her family at Applebee’s for speaking Swahili. The attacker smashed a beer mug across the victim’s face, leaving visible facial and bodily injuries. In Los Angeles, on the same day, a Sikh bus driver was physically attacked and allegedly called “terrorist.”

On November 13th, Paris suffers terrorist attack.

On November 13th, in San Diego, California, an attacker assaulted a visibly pregnant woman in a headscarf. The attacker pushed the stroller that her child was in into the woman’s abdomen. Two mosques in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, Florida respectively threatened with firebombs. In San Diego, California, a Muslim woman is physically assaulted in elevator. In Meriden, Connecticut, a local area mosque was shot with bullets.

On November 13th, in Storrs, CT, a Muslim student at the University of Connecticut returned to his dorm room and found his nametag vandalized with the words “Killed Paris.”

On November 13th, in Omaha, Nebraska, the Islamic Center in Omaha is spray-painted with an Eiffel Tower peace symbol. This is the third time the mosque has been vandalized in the past (4) four months.

On November 14th, in an interview with FOX News, former Governor and Republican Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee explains that we should close our borders to Syrian refugees while observing, "It's time to wake up and smell the falafel. We are importing terrorism."

On November 14th, in Dearborn Michigan, a woman tweeted, "Dearborn, MI, has the highest Muslim population in the United States. Let's (expletive) that place up and send a message to ISIS. We're coming."

On November 14th, in Meriden, CT, someone shot at the Baitul Aman mosque, striking the prayer area typically occupied by worshippers. The mosque was unoccupied at the time of the shooting.

On November 14th, in Austin, TX, a Muslim student was physically assaulted near the University of Texas campus. The attacker pushed him to the ground and asked whether he was working with ISIS.

On November 14th, in Orlando, FL, someone shot at a Muslim home, with bullets damaging furniture inside.

On November 15th, in Portland, OR, a handful of protestors shouted at worshippers attending the Portland Rizwan Mosque. They held signs stating, "THE WAGES OF SIN & DEATH" and "JESUS SAVES FROM HELL."

In Manhattan, NY on November 15, a man was allegedly harassed because of "what happened in Paris".

On November 15th, in Charlotte, North Carolina, an Uber driver was threatened and violently attacked by a passenger who mistook as Muslim.

On November 15th, in Cincinnati, OH, a Muslim woman was almost run over by driver calling her “terrorist.”

On November 16th, in an MSNBC interview, Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump stated that he would “strongly consider” closing mosques as part of his counter-terrorism strategy. He stated, “Well, I would hate to do it but it’s something you’re going to have to strongly consider. Some of the absolute hatred is coming from these areas ...The hatred is incredible. It’s embedded. The hatred is beyond belief. The hatred is greater than anybody understands.”

On November 16th, in Pflugerville, TX, vandals smeared feces on the door of the Islamic Center of Pflugerville, as well as on torn pages from the Quran. Notably, three hundred (300) community members turned to demonstrate solidarity with the mosque.

On November 16th, in Norman, OK, a man called 911, informed dispatch that he suffered from mental illness, was “going to go out there and just start shooting anything that looks like a Muslim after what they did to France” and was “just going to start shooting at cars.” After tracking down the caller, law enforcement agents found that his gun was loaded.

On November 16th, during a radio interview with Hugh Hewitt, Republican presidential candidate Governor Chris Christie calls for a full stop on Syrian refugee resettlement in the U.S., including for “orphans under 5.”

On November 16th, at Cleveland State University, Bernie Sanders spoke about Donald Trump’s call to ban Muslim immigrants to the U.S. He said: “I am disturbed by some of what I am hearing from my Republican colleagues, and I will just say this: During these difficult times, as Americans we will not

succumb to racism. We will not allow ourselves to be divided and succumb to Islamophobia.”

On November 17th, in an interview with MSNBC, former Governor and Republican Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee stated that he could not think of any group other than Muslims who harm innocent civilians. He explained, therefore, that discriminatory anti-Muslim policies were justified.

In San Antonio, Texas on November 17th, a man allegedly cursed Muslim worshippers outside their house of worship. He was arrested.

On November 17th, in Richmond, Texas, a man threatened via social media to “shoot up a mosque”. He was arrested and charged with making a terroristic threat.

On November 17th, in Fredericksburg, VA, concluded a public meeting discussing a proposal for a new mosque after the crowd became violent toward representatives of the Islamic Center of Fredericksburg. During the meeting, attendees stated, “Every Muslim is a terrorist” and “Nobody, nobody, nobody wants your evil cult.”

On November 18th, in an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stands by his comments about shutting down mosques. He explained, “Some bad things are happening and a lot of them are happening in the mosque and you’re going to have to do something. I’m not the only one saying this, other countries are saying this, frankly, but some really bad things are happening.”

On November 18th, in Englewood, Colorado, a retail store — Isis Books & Gifts — had its window smashed and sign broken. The business is named after the ancient Egyptian goddess of healing and motherhood.

On November 19th, in an interview with Yahoo News, Republican presidential candidate refused to rule out special IDs and surveillance database for American Muslims. When questioned about warrantless surveillance and searches, Trump responded, “We’re going to have to do things that we never did before. And some people are going to be upset about it, but I think that now everybody is feeling that security is going to rule ... And certain things will be done that we never thought would happen in this country in terms of information and learning about the enemy. And so we’re going to have to do certain things that were frankly unthinkable a year ago.”

That same day, November 19th, at a campaign event in Mobile, Alabama, Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson compared Syrian refugees to “rabid dogs,” when he stated, “If there is a rabid dog running around your neighborhood, you’re probably not going to assume something good about that dog. And you’re probably going to put your children out of the way.”

Also on November 19th, in San Diego, California, a Muslim female student was attacked and her headscarf pulled off at San Diego State University.

On November 19th, in Austin, Texas, a Muslim woman found a note, underneath her car windshield, with the words, “Go Away,” scribbled on it. She had just completed her workout at the gym.

On November 19th, in Falls Church, VA, a man used a hoax explosive device at the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center.

On November 19th, in New York, NY, three students physically assaulted a sixth grade Muslim student during recess. They referred to her as ISIS, punched her and attempted to remove her hijab.

On November 20th, in San Antonio, TX, a criminal trespasser dressed in military attire while carrying the American flag began hurling obscenities towards worshippers at the Islamic Center

of San Antonio. The Islamic school housed inside cancelled classes for the week due to safety precautions.

On November 21st, at a campaign event in Birmingham, Alabama, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stated, "Hey, I watched when the World Trade Center came tumbling down ... And I watched in Jersey City, New Jersey, where thousands and thousands of people were cheering as that building was coming down. Thousands of people were cheering. So something's going on. We've got to find out what it is." The next day, in a telephone interview with ABC's This Week program, stood by his statement when confronted with information that law enforcement officials have dispelled rumors that New Jersey Muslims cheered the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

On November 21st, in Corpus Christi, Texas, Abdul Qasim Mosque received a threatening letter stating, "Convert to Christianity before it's too late." On that day, an anti-Muslim group staged a protest outside a mosque in Irving, Texas. Protesters were armed with guns.

On November 23rd, in response to an inquiry from an ABC News journalist, Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson supported Donald Trump's claim that thousands of Muslims celebrated the 9/11 attacks. He stated that he "saw the film."

On November 23rd, in Lubbock, Texas, the Islamic Center of South Plains was vandalized and the mosque's glass door shattered.

On November 26th, in Pittsburgh, PA, a passenger shot a Muslim taxi driver after asking about ISIS and whether he was "Pakistani." The attacker had also mocked the Prophet Muhammad before shooting the victim in the back on Thanksgiving Day.

On November 27th, in Lexington, Kentucky, the Islamic Center of Lexington received the following death threat, "I'm going to kill everyone I [sic] there you Muslim f**ks. Salabis is coming for you."

On November 28th, in Phoenix, Arizona, someone hacked the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix's website with the message, "Vive le France."

On December 1st, in Anaheim, California, the owner of Al-Farah Islamic Clothing retail store found a bullet-riddled copy of the Quran outside the front door. Several months earlier, someone shattered the store window.

Also on December 1, in Los Angeles, California, a Saudi man is physically assaulted after his attacker asks where he is from.

On December 2nd, in San Bernardino, California, a Muslim couple carried out a shooting spree.

On December 2nd, in Manassas, Virginia, a local mosque received a voicemail threat stating with the caller stating that they "will do to your people what you did to them" in reference to the San Bernardino shooting. In North Hollywood, local Islamic Center receives threatening telephone calls.

On December 3rd, in Hawthorne, California, an Islamic school received a threat that everyone on its grounds would be shot.

On December 4th, during the taping of the Des Moines television station KCCI's "Close Up" program in Iowa, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum claimed, "Islam is different from Christianity," and did not enjoy the U.S. Constitution's protection of religious liberty. The FBI had announced a few hours earlier that it was investigating as terrorism a Muslim couple's shooting spree in San Bernardino, California.

On December 4th, during a convocation before 10,000 people at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, the Christian college's President urged its students to carry weapons along with their books. He stated, "I've always thought if more good people had concealed carry permits, then we could end those Muslims before they walked in." He also said, "Let's teach them a lesson if they ever show up here." Muslim activists attributed the mainstreaming of Islamophobia to Republican presidential candidates such as Donald Trump and Ben Carson.

On December 4th, in North Palm Beach, Florida, a man causes property damage to a local mosque.

On December 5th, during her weekly radio program in Las Vegas, Nevada, Assemblywoman Michele Fiore explained concerning her opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement, "What, are you kidding me? I'm about to fly to Paris and shoot 'em in the head myself ... I am not OK with Syrian refugees. I'm not OK with terrorists. I'm OK with putting them down, blacking them out, just put a piece of brass in their ocular cavity and end their miserable life. I'm good with that." She later clarified, "I was not talking about the refugees."

On December 5th, in Twin Falls, Idaho the Islamic Center of Twin Falls was vandalized with its windows and doors spray-painted. In Queens, New York, the owner of Fatima Food Mart in Astoria, Queens was attacked by a customer who stated, "I'll kill Muslims." The victim, who was bleeding, was rushed to a local hospital

On December 6th, during his televised address from the Oval Office to the country, President Obama states that religious extremists comprise a "tiny fraction" of Muslims worldwide while noting, "Muslim Americans are our friends and neighbors, our coworkers, our sports heroes, and yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country. We have to remember that."

On December 6th, in a FOX News appearance about President Obama's Oval Office address, Republican Presidential candidate Marco Rubio reflected in relevant part, "... And then the cynicism — the cynicism tonight to spend a significant amount of time talking about discrimination against Muslims. Where is there widespread evidence that we have a problem in America with discrimination against Muslims? And the refusal to call this what it is — a war on radical Islam."

On December 7th, in a written campaign statement, Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump calls for "... a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on."

On December 7th, in Philadelphia, PA, members of the Al Aqsa Islamic Society found a bloodied pig's head outside its door.

On December 6th, in New York, New York, a patron attacks Muslim employees at a restaurant, throwing chairs and insulting a woman as "trash."

On December 6th, in Castro Valley, California, a woman threw hot coffee at and insulted Muslims in Alameda County Park.

On December 7th, in Miami-Dade, Florida, someone shot a Muslim store clerk.

On December 7th, in Vandalia, Ohio, a seventh grader threatened to shoot a Muslim schoolmate while they were riding the school bus home. He also called the victim "towelhead," "terrorist," and the "son of ISIS."

On December 7th in Washington, DC, a man texts "Death to Muslims" after a Muslim customer cancels an appointment. On December 8th, in Jersey City, New Jersey, the Al Tawheed mosque received a threatening note that stated, in part, "We do not want you here. We do not like you. You are evil." The

mosque received a threatening voicemail approximately one month prior.”

On December 8th, in Grand Forks, North Dakota, a popular Muslim-owned restaurant was vandalized and set on fire.

On December 8th, in Plano, Texas, a Muslim family home’s windows are shattered; someone attacked their home with rocks the following day as well.

On December 9th, in Longview, Texas, law enforcement officials investigated a tip concerning a threat to a local area mosque.

On December 9th, in Buena Park, California, a Sikh temple is vandalized with obscenities about a terrorist organization. In New York, New York, man shouts expletives at Muslims in convenience store.

On December 9th, someone attacks a Muslim family’s Plano home for the second time in two days with rocks

Also on December 9th, in Seattle, Washington, someone attacked a ride-share driver in the head while accusing him of being a terrorist.

On December 10th, while speaking at the Heritage Foundation, Ted Cruz criticized U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch’s remarks about the need to crack down on anti-Muslim discrimination. Despite the fact that anti-Muslim attacks jumped in November and December 2015, Cruz dismissed Lynch’s assessment and implied that acknowledging the reality of Islamophobia is dangerous.

On December 10th, in Tampa, Florida, a Muslim woman was shot at while in her car, driving away from a local area mosque.

The same day, another Muslim woman in Tampa was almost driven off the road. She was wearing a hijab.

In Santa Clara, CA, the headquarters of CAIR-CA is sent an envelope of white powder. The same day, in Washington, DC, CAIR headquarters is evacuated after a suspicious letter is sent to its office.

On December 10, a Muslim woman in Secaucus, New Jersey was harassed by two men, who were arrested and faced charges of bias intimidation.

Also on December 10th, in Chino Hills, California, a man threatens a Muslim woman with knife. She was at a car wash. In Alameda, California, someone threw a brick at the Islamic Center of Alameda, shattering its window. A mosque in Coachella Valley, California was firebombed. The mosque had also received threatening telephone calls. And, its imam cites Trump's Islamophobic political rhetoric.

On December 10th, during an interview with the Daily Signal, Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz states, "I don't think we should be indiscriminately closing mosques, but I also don't think we should be blind to the fact that there have been mosques that have been a nexus for promoting jihad, and we need to use all of the tools of national security and law enforcement to stop any jihadist from murdering Americans."

On December 11th, in Sterling, Virginia, Democratic presidential candidate Martin O'Malley visits a mosque on the campaign trail. He is the first presidential candidate to do so.

On December 11th, in Chicago, Illinois, a Muslim home was vandalized with the words "Go home."

On December 12th, in Phoenix, Arizona, a local area mosque is vandalized.

On December 13th, during an appearance on ABC's *This Week*, Republican Presidential Candidate Ben Carson called for scrutiny of all Muslims entering and living in the U.S. He cited an

alleged Muslim strategy to destroy Western civilization from within.

On December 13th, in Hawthorne, California, vandals defaced two mosques. One of the mosques found the words, “Jesus is the way,” scribbled on a wall.

On December 13th, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a robber called a store clerk at Bottlenecks Food and Drink Shop a “terrorist” immediately prior to shooting him in the face.

On December 14th, in Cooper City, Florida, someone vandalized Nur-Ul-Islam Academy with the following message, “[Expletive] Muslims.” The victims cite Trump’s political rhetoric as contributing to the hostile environment.

The same day, in Lake Balboa, California, middle school defaced with graffiti that included anti-Islamic rhetoric.

On December 15th, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, someone left raw meat in a Muslim newspaper outside a Muslim-owned home.

On December 15th, in New York, New York, threats are made to a Muslim judge on social media.

On December 16th, in Salt Lake, Utah, a businesses owned by men of Middle Eastern origin was vandalized. The same day, another Salt Lake business owned by a Muslim was also targeted.

On December 17th, in South Los Angeles, California, Muslim man physically assaulted and told to “Go back to your country.”

On December 18th, in Augusta County, Virginia, local law enforcement officials shut down all public schools after a homework assignment on Islam caused a firestorm of controversy including threatening telephone calls and emails.

On December 18th, in Washington, DC, members of the House of Representatives introduce a resolution condemning anti-Muslim hate crimes, Islamophobic rhetoric and related prejudice.

On December 18th, in Crestview, Florida, a man threw bacon into a Muslim woman's shopping cart and said, "Merry Christmas buddy."

On December 19th, in Chatsworth, California, a man's motorcycle is defaced with anti-Arab hate language and "Trump."

On December 20th, in Richmond, California, local law enforcement officials arrested a man for making an explosive device in his home. He planned to harm local American Muslims and his Facebook account included a number of posts lauding Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

On December 21st, in an MSNBC interview, Republican Presidential candidate Rick Santorum stated that most Muslims are not doing enough to combat violent extremism.

On December 24th, in South Kingston, Rhode Island, a customer threatens to kill a store clerk while stating, "We don't want Muslim stores in our neighborhood. No Muslim stores in our neighborhood."

On December 24th, in Richardson, Texas, a shooter yelled "Muslim" as he killed one man and injured another.

On December 25th, in Houston, Texas, firefighters responded to a "suspicious" fire at a local mosque.

On December 26th, in Tracy, California, the Tracy Islamic Center was firebombed and a Molotov cocktail found at the cite. In New York, New York, a man is charged with a hate crime after yelling, "I want to see the blood of Muslims on the street." In Fresno, California, a Sikh man is threatened and run over.

On December 27th, in Las Vegas, Nevada, someone left raw bacon on the door handles of Masjid-e-Tawheed.

On January 1st, in Titusville, Florida, someone vandalized the Islamic Society of Central Florida Al-Mumin Mosque, causing property damage and leaving bacon on the mosque's front door.

On January 1st, in Denver, Colorado, Zamzam Halal International Market and Deli was set ablaze. Local law enforcement authorities question whether there is a bias motive. The same day, in Fresno, California, a Sikh man is stabbed to death.

On January 8th, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, a Muslim woman is escorted out of a political rally for Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. She had engaged in a silent protest.

On January 8th, in Owensboro, Kentucky, the Islamic Center of Owensboro was vandalized.

On January 12th, in Omaha, Nebraska, two masked men vandalized the Islamic Center of Omaha and left bacon on a door. It is the fourth bias attack against the mosque.

On January 12th, in his State of the Union address, President Obama stated, "We need to reject any politics that targets people because of race or religion. This is not a matter of political correctness. This is a matter of understanding just what it is that makes us strong."

On January 12th, in an interview with CNN, Republican Presidential candidate Ben Carson criticized members of Congress for inviting Muslim constituents to the State of the Union. Specifically, two guests with associations to the Council on American Islamic Relations drew Carson's ire. He has called for an investigation of CAIR while depicting their activities as "not pro-American."

On January 13th, in Sunrise, Florida, local law enforcement officials opened an investigation after a Facebook user posted a violent threat to a local area mosque.

On January 15th, in New York, New York, a Muslim man was attacked by two assailants who yelled, "ISIS, ISIS," while punching and kicking him. The victim was dressed in traditional Muslim religious attire.

On January 16th, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a Muslim man who was speaking Arabic was physically assaulted.

January 20th: For the third time in a week, residents in an adjacent apartment complex threw trash and bottles at Muslims attending a Tucson mosque.

On January 23rd, during a campaign related event in Sioux Center, Iowa, Republican presidential candidate stated, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters, okay? It's, like, incredible."

On January 25th, in Daytona Beach, Florida, a building set to become a mosque was intentionally set ablaze.

On January 25th, in Muscatine, Iowa, a Sikh protestor wearing a red turban was escorted out of a political rally for Donald Trump after unfurling a banner that stated, "Stop Hate."

On January 26th, during a political campaign event in Iowa, former U.S. Secretary of State and Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton denounces Donald Trump's Islamophobic rhetoric. She stated, "One of the most disturbing aspects of this campaign has been the language of Republican candidates, particularly their frontrunner, that insults, demeans, denigrates different people. I found it particularly harmful the way [Trump] has talked about Muslims. It's not only shameful and harmful to our values, it's dangerous. We cannot tolerate this."

On January 27th, in Sacramento, California, anti-Muslim messages were left at Muslim student table at Sacramento State University.

On January 28th, during the GOP debate, Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush responds to a question from Muslim fashion vlogger, Nabeela Noor, about the rising climate of hatred and violence confronting American Muslims. Bush responded, "Nabela's a rising entrepreneur. She wants to pursue the American dream. She's an American citizen. She should not feel uncomfortable about her citizenship. She's not the threat. The threat is Islamic terrorism. We need to focus our energies there, not these broad-blanket kind of statements that will make it harder for us to deal with it."

On February 2nd, in Seattle, Washington, man harasses two outside mosque while brandishing handgun.

On February 3rd, in Baltimore, Maryland, President Obama undertakes his first visit to an American mosque since running for high office in 2008. During his speech, President Obama stated, "You've seen too often people conflating the horrific acts of terrorism with the beliefs of an entire faith. Of course recently we've heard inexcusable political rhetoric against Muslim Americans that has no place in our country. No surprise then that threats and harassment of Muslim Americans have surged."

On February 3rd, during a campaign event in New Hampshire, Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio criticized President Obama's mosque visit stating, "... he gave a speech at a mosque. Oh, you know, basically implying that America is discriminating against Muslims. Of course there's discrimination in America, of every kind. But the bigger issue is: radical Islam. And by the way, radical Islam poses a threat to Muslims themselves."

On February 3rd, during an interview with Fox News, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump criticized Obama's mosque visit and appeared to call his faith beliefs into question by stating, "I think that we can go to lots of places. I don't know, maybe he feels comfortable there ...we have a lot of problems in this country ... there are a lot of places he can go and he chose a mosque."

On February 10th, in Metzger, Oregon, a Muslim man is physically assaulted and dies.

On February 20th, during a campaign event in North Charleston, South Carolina, Republican Presidential frontrunner Donald Trump appeared to encourage shooting Muslim prisoners with bullets coated with pig's blood. Referring to an old fabrication about U.S. General John Pershing experience in Philippines, Trump stated, "He took 50 bullets and he dipped them in pig's blood," Trump said. "And he had his men load his rifles and he lined up the 50 people, and they shot 49 of those people. And the 50th person, he said, 'You go back to your people and you tell them what happened.' And for 25 years there wasn't a problem."

On February 21st, in Affton, Missouri, a man threatens to murder a Muslim family house hunting. He asked, "You Muslim? All of you should die!" He disappeared into his house and then returned with a handgun and stated, "You, your wife, and your kids have to die." Muslim activists cite Trump's irresponsible political rhetoric.

On February 24th, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a local mosque, Umatul Islam Center, was vandalized, with doors and windows broken and resulting in more than \$5,000 in damages.

On February 24th, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, three Sudanese youth — including two Muslims — were murdered "execution style" in an area house.

On February 25th, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, threats target local CAIR office in advance of day of political activism.

On February 28th, in Plainfield, Indiana, the headquarters of the Islamic Society of North America is vandalized.

On February 27th, in Dearborn, Michigan, a Muslim candidate for political office received one of his mailers with the following bigoted comments, “Meet Abdullah,” “No Arabs,” and “Go back to Lebanon.” The victim filed a police report.

On February 28th, in Huntington Beach, California, attackers stabbed a Muslim teenager twice as he was walking home and speaking Arabic with his brother-in-law.

On February 29th, in Buffalo, New York, several men in their vehicle began insulting two Muslim teenagers wearing hijab and then attacked them with eggs.

On February 29th, in Hood River Oregon, a Buddhist monk mistaken for a Muslim was attacked.

On March 2nd, in Spokane, Washington, a Sikh temple — mistaken for a mosque — is vandalized and their holy book desecrated.

On March 3rd, while riding a local train in New Jersey, a passenger verbally attacked a group of Muslim university students wearing the hijab, hurling anti-Muslim obscenities. Onlookers remained silent even after the victims began crying.

On March 9th, during an interview with CNN’s Anderson Cooper, Republican presidential candidate states, “I think Islam hates us ... there is a tremendous hatred. And we have to be very vigilant. We have to be very careful. And we can’t allow people coming into this country who have this hatred of the United States.”

On March 10th, in Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern students vandalized Muslim students’ photos.

On March 12th, in Wichita, Kansas, a Muslim and Latino man were physically assaulted while the attacker shouted, “brown trash,” “Trump will win,” “We will make America great again,” and “Trump, Trump, Trump.” The victims had stopped for fuel and snacks at a Kwik Stop close to the Wichita State University campus.

On March 13th, in an appearance on Fox News Sunday, Trump described 27% of Muslims as “very militant.”

On March 21, in Riverside, California, Muslim and Middle Eastern college students’ photos, mailboxes, and offices were vandalized.

On March 22nd, in an interview with CNN’s Anderson Cooper following the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Belgium, Republican Presidential candidate Ted Cruz stated, “We need to empower law enforcement to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods.” He also claimed, “For years, the West has tried to deny this enemy exists out of a combination of political correctness and fear. We can no longer afford either. Our European allies are now seeing what comes of a toxic mix of migrants who have been infiltrated by terrorists and isolated, radical Muslim neighborhoods.” Donald Trump later described this as a “good idea.”

On March 25th, in Omaha, Nebraska, the Islamic Center of Omaha received a threatening email that stated, “Your so-called peaceful religion just killed more innocent people. We think its is now time to fight back starting with you. Believe it. See you in hell.” The mosque had been vandalized four times recently.

On March 26, signs promoting student-run events about Islam were torn down.

On March 30, 2016 “Stop Islam” written in chalk in public space at University of Michigan.

THE BRIDGE INITIATIVE

Based in Georgetown University's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, the Bridge Initiative is a multi-year research project that connects the academic study of Islamophobia with the public.

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