

# Anti-Muslim Discrimination

*Adaptation of article from ACLU*

Recently, we have seen how fear and hateful speech has been used to justify discrimination against Muslims. This has resulted in unjustified **surveillance**, unlawful **profiling**, and immigration policies that target people based on their religion or nationality. As a result, even though hate crimes are down overall, hate crimes against Muslims are up.

The ACLU works to fight anti-Muslim discrimination by fighting against unconstitutional surveillance programs, discriminatory immigration laws and more.



## Religious Freedom

From religious discrimination to attacks on Islamic centers, Muslims in America are being unfairly targeted simply for exercising their right to religious freedom.

The ACLU works to protect religious freedom, one of America's most fundamental liberties by defending mosques and fighting discrimination against American Muslims in public, in prisons and in their workplaces.



## Biased National Security Profiling

The government discriminates against Muslims in multiple ways. At airports, the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) looks for suspicious passengers using 'signs' from a program that does not have any scientific basis and has actually led to many cases of racial and religious profiling.

The ACLU has pushed back on this by lobbying in Congress and challenging the government in court.



## Immigration Discrimination

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, there was an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment across the country. Congress passed a law that allowed discrimination against people who were citizens of both America and Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria, or anyone who has visited those countries in recent years — including the relatives of American citizens wanting to visit family.



The ACLU has worked actively against these laws by actively lobbying against Congress to stop changes that would discriminate against these individuals.

## Countering Violent Extremism

The government's "Countering Violent Extremism," or "CVE" program focuses mostly on American Muslim communities, **stigmatizing** them as suspicious. The program asks law enforcement, social service providers, teachers, and members of religious communities to identify people who might show 'signs' of extreme or "radical" views. Research shows that there are no reliable indicators that can be used to predict who will commit a violent act.



There is no evidence that proves CVE programs are effective — but a lot of evidence that CVE programs threaten our freedoms and are not productive. To make matters worse, because CVE programs target American Muslim communities, these communities are seen as 'suspicious' and singled out for surveillance based only on their faith.

## Social Media Marketing

Many people want technology companies to report and shut down potential "terrorist activity" on their platforms. While that is important, it would be impossible for social media companies to watch all of the speech on their platforms, and it would lead to increased government inspection of our social media and limit free expression. And the government has



a long history of using national security to justify the suppression of free speech- which is our best tool to speak out against hateful ideas.

## Watchlists

The U.S. government has a watchlist system that categorizes hundreds of thousands of people — including U.S. citizens — as terrorists based on vague standards and secret evidence. The consequences of this categorization have included repeated questioning, harassment by law enforcement, or a ban on air travel. To make matters worse, the watchlists have been found to be filled with errors, and people on the list don't have a good way to correct the errors and clear their names.



The ACLU is advocating to fix the entire watchlisting system to make sure it aligns with the Constitution.

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- **Profiling:** to use physical features (like race or ethnicity) to assume someone is suspicious
  - **Surveillance:** close observation, especially of a suspected criminal
  - **Stigmatizing:** to treat someone or something unfairly by disapproving of him, her, or it: