



Research and Resources on American Muslims and the Impact in the United States of Events in Gaza, Israel, and Surrounding Region

The destruction and skyrocketing death toll in Gaza has horrified the world, as did the attacks in Israel on October 7th. As the worsening crisis continues to unfold overseas, the ramifications in the American context have included Islamophobic, anti-Arab, and antisemitic actions and incidents, including the murder of 6-year-old Palestinian American Wadea Al-Fayoume, killed by his family's landlord in Illinois in a hate fueled attack that also injured his mother.

On university campuses, within workplaces and beyond, the limits of the right to free speech and to assembly, guaranteed by the First Amendment, are being tested. [Students and faculty at educational institutions are facing pressure and threats of being doxxed, defamed, and disavowed on campuses and by potential employers for expressing themselves.](#) Similar scenarios are playing out [in workplaces](#). Social media platforms are [being accused of censoring users posting in support of Palestinians](#). Muslim/Jewish relationships, strong in recent years, are also being tested, and there are looming questions about how current events will affect the 2024 US elections, with [political rhetoric alienating a wide swathe of Muslim and Arab voters](#).

Within this context, ISPU offers a selection of research and resources that can lend perspective on these domestic issues arising. This includes:

- Research focused on combating anti-Muslim hate and bigotry, the impact of political rhetoric on Muslims, media coverage of violence, the right to protest, and views on BDS, Muslim/Jewish relationships and Muslim political participation and affiliation.
- Toolkits for addressing and mitigating the impacts of current events on American Muslims.
- ISPU Scholar analysis and tools on what is taking place.

For more resources visit: www.ispu.org. Note: This is a living document, and additional resources will be added as needed.

Muslims are negatively impacted by political rhetoric:

- **Muslims are negatively impacted by politics and political rhetoric:**
 - More than one-third of Muslims reported experiencing fear and anxiety [post 2016 election](#).
 - [The impacts measured included: suffering enough stress/anxiety to believe mental health services were necessary: making plans to leave the country if necessary. and fearing for personal or family safety from white supremacist groups](#)
 - Leaders shape the way the public responds to events. [Research from Pew Research Center shows anti-Muslim violence](#) spiked in times of heightened political rhetoric. In fact, assaults against Muslims were higher in 2016 than any year on record, including right after 9/11.
- **Most Americans believe that negative political rhetoric toward Muslims is [harmful to the United States](#).**

- And, most Americans say they want to live in a country where [no one is targeted](#) for their religious identity.

Islamophobia is pervasive, systemic and a threat to all:

- Islamophobia is pervasive, systemic and a threat to all. [Explore extensive ISPU data on Islamophobia and its impacts.](#)
- Some key points:
 - [Muslims are the most likely faith group measured to face religious discrimination](#)
 - This has [held steady over many years](#) with the majority of Muslims experiencing Islamophobia year after year.
 - [Nearly half \(48%\) of Muslim families with school-age children reported having a child who faced religious-based bullying in the past year.](#) 42% of families reported their child was bullied by a teacher or school official *at school* and 19% from a teacher or school official *online*.
 - [Discrimination from social media platforms: Nearly half \(46%\) of Muslims who have experienced](#) any religious discrimination in the past year have experienced discrimination from social media platforms. This discrimination may manifest in several ways including having messages removed, accounts suspended or closed, or being completely kicked off a platform.
 - [A majority of mosque leaders](#) are concerned about personal safety and security at their houses of worship when they gather.
 - [Islamophobia is linked to acceptance of anti-democratic, authoritarian and discriminatory policies](#)
 - These include: greater acceptance of military targeting of civilians; greater acceptance of individual targeting of civilians, greater acceptance of authoritarian attitudes, including suspending checks and balances and targeting of the press; and greater support for discriminatory policies, including the Muslim Ban and surveillance of mosques

Media helps shape how events are understood:

- [Collective blame](#) is harmful and inaccurate
 - Collective blame is the idea that most of a group (a racial, religious, or other group) are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other members of that group.
- Research shows that while the US media portrayals depict Muslims as more prone to violence than other Americans, they are, in fact, at least as likely to reject violence.
 - [Muslims are the most likely faith group measured to reject the military targeting of civilians, with 65% saying that it is never justified](#)
 - [Muslims are as likely as others to reject violence by individuals against civilians](#)
- The media shapes how current events are perceived. ISPU offers [a journalist toolkit](#) with strategies on covering Muslims in the US and the issues that impact them.
- [Perpetrators of ideologically motivated violent plots that were not carried out who were perceived to be Muslim have qualitatively different media coverage \(770% more\) than perpetrators not identified as Muslim.](#)

In recent years Muslim/Jewish relationships have been strong even in areas of disagreement:

- [Jewish and Muslim relationships have been strong in recent years](#)
 - While levels of Islamophobia among the general public have remained steady, Jewish opinions of Muslims have steadily improved
 - In 2019, Jewish Americans were the most likely group surveyed to know a Muslim personally, a factor associated with lower levels of Islamophobia
- [Jewish Americans are, after Muslims, the next most likely American religious group to report experiencing religious discrimination.](#)
 - This has held steady over many years. ([Trend data](#))
 - Research shows antisemitism and Islamophobia, along with anti-Black racism, are branches on the same tree of bigotry, which harm all Americans
- **The majority of Americans view laws that penalize the boycott of Israel as an infringement on constitutional rights**
 - [Regardless of knowledge about BDS and level of support, 4 in 5 in the American general public, as well as majorities of all faith and non-faith groups, hold the view that laws penalizing people for participating in BDS directed at Israel are an infringement of constitutional rights](#)
 - Read the full analysis of views on [BDS](#)

A sizable percentage of Muslim voters are not aligned with either dominant political party:

- **American Muslims are equally likely to politically identify as Democrats or Independents.** ([AMP 2022](#))
 - Forty-six percent of Muslims identify as **Democrats**, as likely as Jews (45%) and the nonaffiliated (40%) and more likely than Catholics (35%), Protestants (25%), white Evangelicals (6%), and the general public (32%).
 - 40% of Muslims identify as **Independents**, more likely than any other group (17%-32%).
 - One in ten Muslims identify as **Republicans**, on par with the nonaffiliated (11%) but lower than all other groups (18%-69%).
 - The **youngest Muslims** aged 18-29 are less likely than their elders to identify with a party. Among 18-29-year-old Muslims, nearly half identify as Independents (49%) compared to just a third of 30-49-year-olds (33%). Likewise, younger Muslims are less likely to identify as Democrats compared to those 30-40 years old (39% vs. 51%, respectively).
 - The **large politically independent** segment among Muslims suggests that many Muslims make voting decisions based more on changing policy issues and less along fixed partisan lines. It also suggests that many Muslims don't identify with either party's platform in full.

Additional Related ISPU Resources:

- [Educator's Toolkit](#)
- [Mental Health](#) Toolkit



- [Islamophobia is Pervasive, Systemic and a Threat to All: Resources](#)
- [Countering Anti-Muslim Mosque Opposition](#) Toolkit
- [Countering and Dismantling Islamophobia Toolkit](#)
- [Briefing Book for Policymakers](#) and [Government Administrators](#) Toolkit
- [Islamophobia](#) Toolkit
- [American Muslims 101](#)
- [Religious Based Bullying and Evidence-Based Resources](#)

ISPU Scholar's Work:

Disclaimer: the work linked below reflects the view of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the view of ISPU. ISPU scholars provide insight into the major debates taking place across the country. They offer context-specific analysis and recommendations to journalists, policymakers, and the general public. Explore ISPU's full list of scholars [here](#).

- **Moustafa Bayoumi:** [Standing up for Palestine is Also Standing up to Save the West from the Worse of Itself](#) (The Guardian)
- **Moustafa Bayoumi:** [The Double Standard with Israel and Palestine Leaves us in Moral Darkness](#) (The Guardian)
- **Moustafa Bayoumi:** [Everyone Loves Diversity and Inclusion - Until you Stick up for Palestinians](#) (The Guardian)
- **Rutgers Center for Security, Race and Rights (Sahar Aziz):** [Teach-In on Gaza](#)
- **Rutgers Center for Security, Race and Rights (Sahar Aziz):** [Presumptively Antisemitic - Islamophobic Tropes in the Palestine-Israel Discourse](#)
- **Saher Aziz:** [Muslim women in the West in the Crosshairs of Zionists, White 'feminists'](#) (Aljazeera)
- **Saeed Khan:** [CBS News Segment on analyzing Israel-Gaza and history of conflicts in the region](#) (CBS News)
- **Rania Awad:** [The Devastating Mental Health Effects of Islamophobia](#) (Time)

About the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU):

ISPU provides objective research and education about American Muslims to support well-informed dialogue and decision-making. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact American Muslim communities. Our research aims to educate the general public and equip community change agents, the media, policymakers, and others to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building in-house capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

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