THE BIAS BRIEF:
TRUMP'S IMPACT ON ANTI-MUSLIM BIAS

Anti-Muslim bias incidents totaled 10,015 from January 2014 through June of 2019.

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Research and Advocacy Department
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is no secret that our nation’s politics and culture have become more polarized since Donald Trump entered the presidential elections in 2015 and then became president. His divisive and xenophobic rhetoric has targeted Mexicans, African Americans, Muslims, and anyone with differing views as un-American outsiders. Most alarming however, this rhetoric has translated into policy, dangerously impacting the lives of millions both here and abroad. Muslims have been at the center of President Trump’s hateful wrath and CAIR has closely monitored its impact and fought to stop the flood of bias and bigotry affecting American Muslim communities. This report provides a top-level summary of the rise of bias incidents and hate crimes as reported to CAIR offices from 2014 to 2019, the time period corresponding to Trump’s entrance into national politics.

The results are alarming: a total of 10,015 anti-Muslim bias incidents, with measurable spikes in 2017 after the declaration of the Muslim Ban. Like other hate-crime reporting mechanisms, CAIR’s numbers are assumed to be far below the reality. Other findings during the 2014-2019 period include:

• An increase in the violent nature of bias incidents: 1,164 anti-Muslim hate-crimes, including physical assault and property damage.
• The highest spike in bias incidents occurred in 2017 with 2,599 incidents — a 94% jump over 2014 levels, as a result of the Muslim Ban
• An increase in incidents involving federal agencies: 2,783 acts of bias or discrimination by agencies including the FBI, TSA, and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).
• The FBI is the most common type of federal government agency for which American Muslims report acts of bias, accounting for almost half of the total number of cases reported against federal agencies: 1,177 total bias incidents.
• The most frequent type of abuse, aggregated from 2014 through June of 2019, was harassment, defined as unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited conduct which annoys, demeans, or offends the target and results in a hostile environment for the target.
• CAIR chapters recorded 506 anti-Mosque incidents.
• Local and regional municipalities must work with civil society groups involved in interfaith activity, immigrant affairs, and diversity advocacy to strengthen mechanisms to report bias incidents and seek redress.

• Philanthropic foundations must increase their support of civil society organizations active in public education, electoral mobilization, hate-crime monitoring, and legal support.

• Civil society groups must increase their capacity to address increasing rates of discrimination, and work in coalitions to impact local and regional policies.

• Private sector institutions, especially those in news, entertainment, social media, and internet service, must take active measures to ensure that their platforms are not used to enable and spread hateful and dangerous worldviews. The private sector must also lend its resources to institutions in need of capacity building to address hate-crime monitoring and redress.

• Average citizens must recognize and play their role to turn the tide against hate by volunteering their time, resources, and expertise to participate in this battle.
From 2014 through June of 2019, CAIR chapters across the country recorded a total of 10,015 anti-Muslim bias incidents. The trend in data shows a steady increase in the number of bias incidents targeting American Muslims over time, with the initial jump occurring after the 2015 entry of Donald Trump into the presidential elections.
• In 2016, anti-Muslim bias incidents numbered 2,213, an increase of 65% over 2014 levels.

• The highest spike occurred in 2017 with 2,599 incidents, a 94% jump over 2014 levels. The dramatic rise of reported incidents in 2017 can be attributed to the Muslim Ban Executive Order, which was signed within the first 10 days of the Trump presidency.

• In 2018, bias incidents remained 24% higher than they were in 2014.

• In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 759 anti-Muslim bias incidents. Given the onset of another presidential election, bias incident numbers are projected to be higher than 2014 levels by the end of the year.

*Alaska and Hawaii had 4 and 5 incidents, respectively, from January 2014 through June 2019.
In May 2019, Florida police arrested a man who published social media posts that threatened to “kill Muslims one by one,” and targeted a mosque in Miami Gardens. In an arrest report, police said he told investigators he has a “hatred for Muslims that own corner stores” and that he has a desire to “take them out.” and “send them to hell.”

HATE CRIMES

Not only did the number of bias incidents increase, the violent nature of the incidents also jumped. From 2014 through June of 2019, CAIR chapters across the country recorded a total of 1,164 anti-Muslim hate crimes, including physical assault and property damage. Mirroring total bias incidents, reported hate crimes against the American Muslim community spiked after the 2015 entry of Donald Trump into the presidential elections.
In 2016, hate crimes numbered 260, a 584% increase over 2014 levels. The highest jump occurred in 2017 with 300 incidents, a 690% jump from 2014 numbers. In 2018, hate crime remained 253% higher than they were in 2014. In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 75 hate crimes. Given the onset of another presidential election, hate crime numbers are projected to be higher than 2014 levels by the end of the year.

**FEDERAL AGENCIES**

From 2014 through June of 2019, CAIR chapters reported a total of **2,783 incidents** that involved federal government agencies. The highest number of cases occurred in 2017, at 919 reported incidents. This can be attributed to the Muslim Ban Executive Order signed in January of 2017.

The overall trend demonstrates that the FBI is the most common type of federal government agency for which American Muslims report acts of bias, accounting for almost half of the total number of cases: 1,177 total bias incidents. This is followed by the CBP with 635 total bias incidents.

**MOST FREQUENT TYPES OF BIAS INCIDENTS**

The most frequent type of abuse, aggregated from 2014 through June of 2019, was harassment, defined as unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited conduct which annoys, demeans, or offends the target and results in a hostile environment for the target. This was closely followed by employment discrimination.

![Types of Abuse (2014-2019)](chart.png)
CAIR chapters recorded **506 anti-mosque incidents** from 2014 through June of 2019. During this time, California had the highest number of incidents, with 127 cases, followed by Florida with 53 and Texas with 38.

Of the total 506 incidents, the highest single type of incidents was a result of damage, destruction, or vandalism to mosque property at 148. Thirty-seven were related to land zoning issues.

**State Breakdown of Anti-Mosque Incidents (2014-2019)**

An arsonist attacked a mosque in San Diego, California, setting it ablaze on March 24, 2019. The culprit also left graffiti on the mosque driveway referencing the New Zealand shooting rampage at 2 mosques that left dozens dead.
In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 759 anti-Muslim bias incidents nationwide. Given the onset of another presidential election, bias incident numbers are projected to be higher than 2014 levels by the end of the year.

- The most frequent type of bias incident in 2019 was employment discrimination, constituting nearly 15% of all incidents.
- This was followed closely by harassment, defined as unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited conduct which annoys, demeans, or offends the target and results in a hostile environment for the target.
In the first half of 2019, CAIR recorded 75 hate crimes. Hate crime are projected to be higher than 2014 levels by the end of the year.

It is interesting to note that while men are generally targeted more than women within the totality of bias incidents, the discrepancy largely disappears when only hate crimes are compared.
Because Muslim women often wear a headscarf or hijab, they tend to be more visible in public spaces as Muslim than are their male counterparts. This enhanced visibility means a higher chance of Muslim women being targets of physical assault.

In 2017, a Muslim dentist in Michigan had his clinic and his home raided by the FBI. They terminated his income, seized his car, and stole his savings. The day they raided his clinic, he was also arrested and taken to jail for 4 days. After upsetting his entire life, they declared him innocent.

**FEDERAL AGENCIES**

The total number of federal agency-related incidents was 238 in 2019. This is 31% of all bias incidents.
The FBI remained the most common federal agency, responsible for 32% of the total number of federal agency-related incidents. This was followed by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, with 42 incidents.

Federal Government Agency Incidents (January-June 2019)

- FBI: 77 incidents
- USCIS: 42 incidents
- CBP: 36 incidents
- Multiple Federal Government Agencies: 34 incidents
- TSA: 25 incidents
- Other Government Agency: 14 incidents
- ICE: 10 incidents

Baby Doe was only seven months old when he was stopped by the government from boarding a flight with his mother. He was patted down, subjected to “chemical testing,” and his diapers were examined. All of this because Baby Doe’s boarding pass was stamped with “SSSS,” singling out the 7-month-old as a “known or suspected terrorist.” In 2016, Baby Doe, became part of a class-action lawsuit filed by CAIR to take aim at the federal government’s unconstitutional watchlisting system.
THE FIGHT AGAINST THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL WATCHLIST

Nearly every American Muslim has experienced, or has had a family member or friend experience, “extra-screening” procedures while traveling. Whether it’s the infamous “SSSS” stamped on their boarding pass, or being blocked from boarding a flight, American Muslims are disproportionately impacted by the federal government’s unconstitutional surveillance program known as the “Watchlist.” After nearly a decade of strategic litigation wins, CAIR is leading the civil rights battle to end this unreasonable government program.

WATCHLIST 101: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Watchlist, or the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB), is administered by the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC), a multi-agency institution established through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of State, and the Department of Justice. TSC’s establishment was an outcome of HSPD-6, the Bush administration’s directive to establish the DHS and “consolidate the government’s approach to terrorism screening and provide for the appropriate and lawful use of Terrorist Information in screening processes.” The Watchlist, though administered by the TSC and overseen by the FBI, rests within, and interacts closely with, a larger web of federal agencies responsible for counter-terrorism programming. The TSC also coordinates closely with the National Crime Information System (NCIS) as it disseminates information to local law enforcement agencies nationwide.

CAIR’s litigation team knows more about the Watchlist than Congress itself.
The number of individuals on the list is unknown but estimated to be between 1 and 1.5 million people worldwide, a fraction of which are believed to be American citizens. The Watchlist is populated by a “nomination” system whereby an individual is identified as a “known or suspected terrorist” based on reasonable suspicion. However, this standard has been routinely criticized by government agents themselves, as well as by academics, journalists, and independent experts.

![Image of Terrorist Screening Database - The Unconstitutional Watchlist]

**THE WATCHLIST AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

The Watchlist violates the constitutional rights of American citizens and residents. Placement of individuals on the list is arbitrary, capricious, and an abuse of discretion. In 2016, CAIR filed a lawsuit in Virginia against the Watchlist on behalf of 25 American Muslims, including a baby, who could no longer board airplanes, were handcuffed at gunpoint during border crossings, and faced other harmful consequences because of their placement on the list.

CAIR has since filed several other cases to challenge the Watchlist in multiple states. As a result of court judgements at various levels of the litigation effort, CAIR has made unprecedented progress in exposing the government’s abuse of power. In fact, at this moment, CAIR’s litigation team knows more about the Watchlist than Congress itself.
Targets of the Watchlist surveillance program face real world consequences including, but not limited to:

- Invasive additional screening and prolonged detentions
- “White torture” harassment at U.S. ports of entry
- Bank account closures without explanation or notice, disrupted transfers
- Inability to test drive and purchase vehicles
- Being treated as armed and dangerous by law enforcement during routine traffic stops
- Inability to obtain employment positions at airports
- Being pressured to become government informants

In March 2019, CAIR revealed that the Watchlist is shared with foreign governments, private businesses, some churches, and even an animal shelter.

If you believe you, or a family member, have been placed on the Watchlist, or are experiencing unusual delays and screening while traveling, please contact CAIR’s legal team at civilrights@cair.com and 202-742-6420.
This data contains a snapshot of the experiences of the American Muslim community. CAIR knows that bias incidents targeting the community are underreported to both law enforcement and community institutions, a problem also recognized in a 2017 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. This data is preliminary and subject to change based on the discovery of new incidents of bias or new facts about prior incidents.

Each year, thousands of complainants contact CAIR through a variety of channels, including telephone, email, CAIR’s mobile app, and the online complaint system. When possible, CAIR staff may also reach out to offer their services to individuals whose incidents were reported in news sources and not directly to CAIR.

Irrespective of the fact that not all cases contain evidence of religious discrimination, each case passes through the investigative stage in order to determine whether CAIR is able to assist the complainant. Each case is fed through the preliminary intake and categorization process that requires a minimum of three to four hours of staff time to address, regardless of whether it is actionable. Therefore, it is conclusive that any case listed in this report as containing an element of religious discrimination has undergone a vetting process which seeks to ensure the highest possible form of accuracy.

In order to compute forecasts, the moving averages method was utilized based on monthly data reports.