

**MUSLIMS FOR
JUST FUTURES**

Community Memorandum: Recommendations for A Foundational White House Islamophobia Strategy

95 Organizations Demand A White House Islamophobia Strategy
that Centers Justice & Accountability

APRIL 2024



About the Organizations

The following organizations contributed to the development of this community memorandum. The following page includes a listing of the 95 organizations that have endorsed and provided input.

Muslims for Just Futures (MJF) is a grassroots organization that works to build power in Muslim communities through collective care, organizing, advocacy and movement-building. MJF is dedicated to countering the widespread divestment from Muslim communities resulting from criminalization, structural Islamophobia, and gendered Islamophobia by focusing on investing in economic justice, gender justice, and healing justice. MJF envisions a society where all of our communities live with dignity, power, and freedom.

Palestine Legal protects the civil and constitutional rights of people in the U.S. who speak out for Palestinian freedom. Palestine Legal is the only legal organization in the United States exclusively dedicated to supporting the movement for Palestinian rights.

Afghans for a Better Tomorrow (ABET) works to bring about transformative change for Afghans in the United States and beyond. ABET works for an equitable, peaceful future where Afghans and other marginalized working-class immigrant communities are uplifted for a better tomorrow.

HEART Women & Girls promotes sexual health, uproot gendered violence, and advances reproductive justice by establishing choice and access for the most impacted Muslims.

Muslim Women For (MWF) is a Muslim women-led and serving grassroots organization based in North Carolina. MWF's vision is to build power in Muslim communities across the state, centering the voices, lived experiences, and histories of Black, brown, queer, immigrant and working class Muslim women. MWF believes in building power at the grassroots.

Detroit Revival Engaging American Muslims (DREAM) is a community-based organization that takes a community organizing and building approach and focuses on housing development, economic development, and community organizing. They work on solving the systemic issues that have caused their neighborhoods to deteriorate, such as Detroit's property tax foreclosure crisis, while also working to bring brick-and-mortar homes and businesses to their neighborhood.

Savage Daughters is a Black & Indigenous Queer Muslim led healing justice organization in the South born out of the rich tapestry of Black and Indigenous ancestral traditions. Their work is focused on decolonization where they strive to dismantle the barriers that have sought to confine us and cultivating a world where all marginalized people can flourish free from the constraints of colonial labels and exclusions.

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) works to defend the constitutional and human rights of social justice movements and communities under threat and helps them build power. CCR stands with social justice movements and communities under threat—fusing litigation, advocacy, and narrative shifting to dismantle systems of oppression regardless of the risk.

American Muslim Bar Association (AMBA) is a representative body of U.S. lawyers, legal professionals, and aspiring attorneys committed to the practice of law and the pursuit of justice in both the public and private spheres.

List of 95 Organizations Endorsing this Memorandum in Support

- ❖ Muslims for Just Futures
- ❖ Palestine Legal
- ❖ HEART Women & Girls
- ❖ DREAM of Detroit
- ❖ 18 Million Rising
- ❖ Adalah Justice Project
- ❖ Afghans for A Better Tomorrow
- ❖ American Muslim Bar Association (AMBA)
- ❖ Apna Ghar, Inc.
- ❖ Arab American Action Network (AAAN)
- ❖ Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee - ADC
- ❖ Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)
- ❖ Asian American Advocacy Fund
- ❖ Asian American Resource Organization
- ❖ Asian Americans United
- ❖ Asian Pacific Environmental Network
- ❖ Asian Solidarity Collective
- ❖ Beloved Community Incubator
- ❖ Bosniak Brotherhood of Genocide Survivors
- ❖ Catalyst Project
- ❖ Cent(HER)ed Collective
- ❖ Center for Constitutional Rights
- ❖ Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
- ❖ Chicago Faith Coalition on Middle East Peace
- ❖ Chicago United Solidarity Project
- ❖ Chicago Youth for Justice
- ❖ Civil Rights Corps
- ❖ Coalition for Civil Freedoms (CCF)
- ❖ Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
- ❖ Community Defense of East Tennessee
- ❖ Defending Rights & Dissent
- ❖ Diaspora Alliance
- ❖ Dissenters
- ❖ DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
- ❖ East End for Peace
- ❖ Equality Labs
- ❖ F.L.Y. Radical Therapy
- ❖ Georgia Muslim Voter Project
- ❖ Grassroots Asians Rising
- ❖ Grassroots Global Justice
- ❖ Hamkae Center - VA
- ❖ HEAL Ohio
- ❖ Healing our Homeland
- ❖ Hindus for Human Rights
- ❖ Indian American Muslim Council
- ❖ InterReligious Task Force on Central America
- ❖ Jewish Voice for Peace
- ❖ Jews For Racial & Economic Justice
- ❖ Justice, Unity, & Social Transformation
- ❖ Laal NYC
- ❖ Malikah
- ❖ Mamas Activating Movements for Abolition & Solidarity
- ❖ Mashallah Business - Chicago
- ❖ Media Justice
- ❖ Mekong NYC
- ❖ Mirror Memoirs
- ❖ Movement for Black Lives (M4BL)
- ❖ MPower Change
- ❖ Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative
- ❖ Muslim Women For National Immigration Project (NIP)
- ❖ National Partnership for New Americans
- ❖ Native Roots Network
- ❖ New Disabled South
- ❖ No Separate Justice
- ❖ ONE DC
- ❖ OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
- ❖ Our Medicine Is Resistance
- ❖ Palestinian American Community Center
- ❖ PARCEO
- ❖ Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)
- ❖ PeoplesHub
- ❖ Philly Muslim Freedom Fund (PMFF)
- ❖ Project Hajra
- ❖ Project South
- ❖ Rayo Counseling & Community Co-op
- ❖ Rising Majority
- ❖ Riverwise Magazine
- ❖ Sakhi for South Asian Women
- ❖ Savage Daughters
- ❖ South Asian Legal Defense Fund
- ❖ South Asian SOAR
- ❖ Southeast Asian Defense Project
- ❖ Southeast Asian Freedom Network
- ❖ The Southwest Collective
- ❖ Unlock the Bar
- ❖ US Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action
- ❖ US Palestinian Community Network
- ❖ Utopia Studio
- ❖ Vigilant Love
- ❖ Vital Arts
- ❖ We Are All America
- ❖ WESPAC Foundation
- ❖ Women Donors Network
- ❖ Woori Juntos
- ❖ Xīn Shēng | 心声 Project

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Section I: Introduction

Structural Islamophobia is a system of dehumanization that impacts Muslims and communities racialized as Muslim. This includes a diverse and broad set of communities of color including Black, Arab, Muslim Middle Eastern, South Asian (BAMEMSA), Sikh, and Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) communities. Eradicating structural Islamophobia requires a thorough and multifaceted strategy that should be guided by those directly affected, as government policies, laws, and institutions serve as the primary drivers of structural Islamophobia.

This memorandum offers input from organizations working with impacted BAMEMSA and SWANA communities on key initial recommendations, as a starting point, for federal government agencies in implementing a comprehensive White House Islamophobia strategy. This memorandum also offers concerns with the existing process for developing the White House Islamophobia strategy, provides a community-rooted framework of structural and gendered Islamophobia and contains key agency recommendations. While these recommendations are wide-ranging, we note that they are not exhaustive. This community memorandum was developed by Muslims for Just Futures with consultation from our working-class community members and Palestine Legal, Afghans for a Better Tomorrow, HEART, DREAM of Detroit, Muslim Women For, American Muslim Bar Association (AMBA), Center for Constitutional Rights, and Savage Daughters. Overall, 95 community-based organizations, national networks, and coalitions working across communities have endorsed the recommendations and joined this memorandum.

Most organizations that offered input expressed substantial concerns, reservations, and lack of trust regarding the White House's approach to soliciting community input and the current political environment. They emphasized the direct role of the White House in perpetuating Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Arab racism through its ongoing support for the genocide and occupation in Palestine, as well as its involvement in military campaigns and wars across the region spanning from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, to Libya and beyond. The increase in hate and prejudice towards BAMEMSA and SWANA communities is directly linked to U.S. military interventions overseas. It is crucial to emphasize that U.S. foreign policy, military interventions, and its treatment of Muslim-majority countries under the guise of the “global war on terror” are deeply rooted in structural Islamophobia. Some organizations have concerns that this initiative serves as a public relations tactic to divert attention from calls for a permanent ceasefire and to gain support during an election year. Furthermore, they underscored that the White House, as an institution, bears significant responsibility for perpetuating decades of institutionalized Islamophobic policies and causing considerable harm under the pretext of national security measures. Therefore, any genuine attempt to combat Islamophobia must start with the government acknowledging the harm it continues to inflict both domestically and internationally, and offering adequate redress to affected communities at home and globally.

Moreover, organizations expressed grave concerns regarding the potential weaponization of this strategy against other marginalized communities, leading to the expansion of criminalization and national security initiatives. The National Security Council's oversight of this strategy raised profound concerns among community organizations. Similar concerns were echoed by over 100 social justice organizations nationwide, representing a diverse array of communities, who cautioned that such government initiatives often fail to enhance community safety. Instead, they argued, these initiatives tend to reinforce state power and further criminalization, neglecting the role of the state in fostering systemic violence.¹

¹ [A Call to Social Justice Movements — Muslims for Just Futures](#). Accessed from MuslimsforJustFutures.org

Section II: Five Pillars of a Community-Led Islamophobia Strategy

To organize broader community recommendations, we are proposing the following five pillars as guiding principles for a White House Islamophobia Strategy. Some of these recommendations are further elaborated upon in Section IV.

- I. **Government Accountability:** Acknowledging the substantial role of the U.S. government in perpetuating structural Islamophobia, an effective strategy necessitates the dismantling of policies and laws entrenched in Islamophobia and broader anti-Muslim national security frameworks. This includes the recognition of the historical continuity of national security programs, past and present, perpetuating structural Islamophobia such as National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP), and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE).

This pillar also calls for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the genocide of Palestinians, including an end to surveillance and militarization at home and abroad. Additionally, a key pillar of the Islamophobia strategy must include accountability and repair for past injustices, and an acknowledgment of the need for collective responsibility across government, corporations, institutions, and individuals. This collective effort underscores the urgency of addressing Islamophobia while highlighting the interconnectedness of systemic injustices and the imperative for comprehensive and collaborative solutions. Many of the broader recommendations are offered in an agenda developed with input from 42 organizations in 2021 calling for dismantling and divesting from the “war on terror” and investing into a community infrastructure of collective care.²

- II. **Transitional Justice:** Embracing transitional justice as a pillar means grappling with mass atrocities and human rights violations. Transitional justice is a “global framework that involves people coming together to address the legacies of horrendous atrocities, or to end recurring cycles of violent conflict, by developing a range of responses.”³ This is essential to truth-telling, memorialization, reparations, and a commitment from the government to cease ongoing and future harms. This also includes exploring connections with other impacted communities such as the Japanese American community, which has advocated for reparations for WWII incarceration camps, to draw parallels between historical injustices and current impacts on BAMEMSA communities by national security policies. This pillar includes advocating for reparations domestically and internationally, including legislative measures like the Afghan Adjustment Act. It would also include the return of frozen sovereign Central Bank assets to the Afghan people, which the Biden administration has set aside for disbursement to the families of the victims of the September 11th attacks. A district court ruled against the families but it is currently under appeal.⁴ Furthermore, it includes supporting cultural initiatives and memorials while prioritizing safety in sharing experiences and amplifying survivor voices. Finally, this pillar includes emphasizing the need for continuity in strategy, regardless of political changes and shifts in the administration, to ensure accountability and prevention of future injustices.

² Muslim Abolitionist Futures Policy and Advocacy Agenda. Accessed from MuslimAbolitionistFutures.org

³ International Center for Transitional Justice. What is Transitional Justice? Accessed from <https://www.ictj.org/what-transitional-justice>

⁴ Center for Constitutional Rights. *Havlish v. Taliban / In re: 9/11 Attacks / Owens v. Taliban - Frozen Afghan Assets* (Amicus). Accessed from <https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/havlish-v-taliban-re-911-attacks-owens-v-taliban-frozen-afghan-assets>

- III. **Transformative Justice:** Applying a transformative justice approach requires addressing root causes and transforming the underlying systems and structures. This is particularly important in addressing hate violence. This includes considering individual victims' experiences, addressing the community's needs as the impact of hate violence reverberates through the broader community, and tackling the underlying systemic conditions and root causes that foster such violence. We want to highlight the approach taken by organizations like Interrupting Criminalization and the broader field responding to gender-based violence that is implementing transformative and restorative justice models for community members that are often dismissed by government agencies and law enforcement when reporting incidents of violence.⁵ We also call on the government to provide support and resources for victims of structural and interpersonal forms of Islamophobia and bias, including access to legal services where survivors request such support, mental health services, and community support networks. It is essential that individuals affected by Islamophobia receive adequate government support and social services.
- IV. **Freedom to Thrive:** This pillar emphasizes equal agency, participation in democratic processes and governance by the most marginalized and impacted community members. It also includes access to resources, community care and well-being, the pursuit of fulfilling lives, and dignified work.

This pillar includes investment into public awareness, political education efforts, and leadership of directly impacted and marginalized communities, including but not limited to, working-class communities, Black Muslim communities, women, immigrant, and refugee communities. Recommendations under this pillar include promoting community initiatives, leaders, and organizations, advocating for educational resources, and fostering the inclusion of decolonized history and education in school curricula that accurately represent the diverse perspectives and backgrounds within BAMEMSA and SWANA communities.

- V. **Solidarity:** Our final pillar of the strategy focuses on guaranteeing that every approach formulated to address Islamophobia by the government must avoid causing harm to other communities or exacerbating internal divisions within Muslim communities. This means refraining from favoring any specific subgroup within the community or allowing the experiences of one subgroup to dictate the experiences of all Muslims, including more broadly BAMEMSA and SWANA communities. Furthermore, it is essential for an Islamophobia strategy to acknowledge that violence against Muslim communities predates 9/11 and is intricately linked to other systems of violence, including anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-immigrant racism, anti-Asian racism, and the targeting of marginalized communities in America throughout history.

Section III: Framework and Definition of Islamophobia

Recommendation I: The strategy should adopt a framework for understanding Islamophobia rather than a rigid definition of Islamophobia. Definitions are often constrictive and static, and therefore can't be responsive to societal developments. We are concerned that biased policymakers and politicians will harm our communities when government-led definitions of Islamophobia are weaponized against movements and will delegitimize the actual experiences of impacted communities that may not fit into rigid definitions set forth by the government. Numerous members of our communities, especially Palestinian communities, are feeling the profound negative effects of the weaponization of certain institutionalized

⁵ Interrupting Criminalization | <https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/>

definitions of Antisemitism to suppress freedom of speech and the right to protest.⁶ The debates surrounding multiple proposed definitions of Antisemitism also illustrate that there is wide divergence within and among communities around what constitutes a particular form of racism or bigotry. Ultimately, defining different types of bigotry does not actually do the work of dismantling them. Legislating a static definition for any particular form of bigotry weakens our efforts to combat discrimination across different contexts and over time, and to tackle their common root causes.

Recommendation II: Any government framework and definition of Islamophobia, including terms like anti-Muslim racism, anti-Muslim discrimination, and anti-Muslim bigotry, must prioritize the role of the state, institutions, government policies and laws as foundational to the construction and proliferation of Islamophobia, including hate-motivated violence towards Muslim communities and those perceived as Muslim. It must also include language that names the interlocking nature of structural Islamophobia with anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Arab racism, anti-Black racism, and other systems of oppression.

Recommendation III: Establish an operational framework of Islamophobia that prioritizes the incorporation of lived experiences and adopts a community-based approach to understanding and addressing both structural and gendered aspects of Islamophobia. Additionally, acknowledging that Islamophobia evolves over time, government bodies should engage with impacted communities continuously to ensure that their frameworks authentically capture community members' experiences. Muslims for Just Futures has offered language and a working framework on both structural and gendered Islamophobia in this memorandum (*see below*). Further, develop mechanisms for ongoing community input to guide the government framework of Islamophobia that guide policy development and government initiatives.

Recommendation IV: Allocate funding for comprehensive research into the manifestations of Islamophobia in the United States, with a particular focus on supporting community-led initiatives and community-led participatory action research.

Recommendation V: Recognize the different impacts experienced by various groups within Muslim communities and the broader BAMEMSA, Sikh, and SWANA communities to formulate policy interventions that consider these diverse identities when crafting government responses to Islamophobia. This includes understanding the unique manifestations of anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism.

Recommendation VI: Place a central focus on examining government and state policies as the main drivers to the perpetuation of Islamophobia.

While Islamophobia is a recent term, the dehumanization of Muslim communities is central to the construction of race and racism that spans European and American forms of Orientalism.⁷ The term “Islamophobia” was introduced to the mainstream in the nineties when the Runnymede Trust set-up a Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia to study the experiences of British Muslims. The Runnymede Trust released one of the first documented studies on Islamophobia in 1997 called, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*.⁸ This report provided the first definitive framework of Islamophobia as “unfounded hostility towards Islam” that resulted in unfair discrimination against

⁶Jewish Voice for Peace. On Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, and Dangerous Conflations. Accessed from <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/2023/11/09/antisemitism-dangerous/>

⁷ Rana, Junaaid. 2011. *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press.

⁸ The Runnymede Trust, 1997. *Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All*. Accessed from <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/islamophobia-a-challenge-for-us-all>

Muslim communities and resulted in the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. Within the United States, the Center for American Progress's report, *Fear Inc*, released in 2011, served as another critical moment to further bring light to the phenomenon of Islamophobia and the role of non-state actors in fueling anti-Muslim bigotry.⁹ Both of these reports were central to shaping mainstream understanding of Islamophobia and the development of policies to counter Islamophobia.

A major limitation of both reports, however, was their frameworks of Islamophobia mainly centered interpersonal forms of Islamophobia with a focus on hate violence, bigotry and violence from non-state actors. The reports applied a definition of Islamophobia that reduces a system of dehumanization to irrational fear of Islam and Muslims. As such, both reports minimized the leading role of government policies that securitized and criminalized Muslim communities that contributes to the social and cultural environment that produces an increase in bigotry and hate violence. Furthermore, while Islamophobia pre-dates 9/11, the policies developed in the wake of 9/11 through the so-called "war on terror" have been essential to exacerbating discrimination and violence against BAMEMSA and SWANA communities.

Critical Muslim scholars and academics have developed a more robust framework of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. Academic initiatives such as the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP) provided one of the first definitions of Islamophobia that tied the violence to Orientalism, imperialism, and a broader history of violence. Outside of IRDP, institutions like Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) conduct research on Muslim communities and Islamophobia, and the Center for Security, Race and Rights works across racial and religious lines to address the underlying structural and systemic causes of Islamophobia and xenophobia against people of Arab, African, and South Asian descent.¹⁰ Muslim academics have also developed a critical body of work on anti-Muslim racism to describe the ways Islamophobia impacts Muslim communities and position it within the broader history of racism and white supremacy. The #IslamophobiaIsRacism syllabus developed by scholars such as Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, Arshad Ali, Evelyn Alsultany, Sohail Daulatzai, Lara Deeb, Carol Fadda, Zareena Grewal, Juliane Hammer, Nadine Naber, and Junaid Rana is a public education resource created by academics to provide resources for teaching and learning about anti-Muslim racism in the United States.¹¹

In addition to the definitions being formulated by academic institutions and think-tanks, social movement and community organizations are developing their own frameworks of working definitions of Islamophobia based on direct organizing and work with community members. While we recommend that the government adopt an approach that focuses on understanding Islamophobia through a framework, as outlined in the key recommendation above, Muslims for Just Futures is offering our community-based working framework and definition of structural and gendered Islamophobia. Additionally, any initiative to define Islamophobia, despite our recommendation to create a framework for understanding it, must involve the leadership of community-based organizations, including the groups joining this memorandum.

Structural Islamophobia is the systematic dehumanization and otherization of Muslim communities, including those perceived as Muslim. It is a system of violence constructed by the state that portrays Muslims and Islam as foreign security threats for the expressed purpose of maintaining and expanding power, domination, and control. It is codified in government laws and policies through explicit and implicit ways, the state's institutions, and the dominant social and political culture. Over time this violence is normalized and accepted, and produces systemic and structural barriers for Muslim

⁹ Center for American Progress, 2001. *Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*. Accessed from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fear-inc/>

¹⁰ [Center for Security, Race and Rights](https://csrr.rutgers.edu). Accessed from <https://csrr.rutgers.edu>

¹¹ Islamophobia is Racism: Resource for Teaching & Learning About anti-Muslim Racism in the United States. <https://islamophobiaistracism.wordpress.com/>

communities, including fracturing internal solidarity within Muslim communities and towards Muslim communities. Structural Islamophobia intersects with interlocking systems of oppression, including anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism.

The accumulation and interaction of systemic Islamophobia over a prolonged period of time produces systemic inequalities for Muslim communities within key areas used to measure quality of life such as:

- *Freedom of movement*
- *Dignity and belonging*
- *Healthcare, education, and housing*
- *Employment and economic justice*
- *Bodily Autonomy, reproductive justice and community wellbeing*
- *Political Power*
- *Narrative Power*

Muslims for Just Futures further breaks down Islamophobia into four components: structural Islamophobia, institutional Islamophobia, interpersonal Islamophobia, and internalized forms of Islamophobia. An essential component of this working definition is connecting structural Islamophobia to interpersonal forms of Islamophobia such as hate violence, bigotry, and violence from non-state actors.

Gendered Islamophobia includes the ways the state utilizes gendered forms of violence to oppress, monitor, punish, maim and control Muslim bodies. It includes the ways gender binaries and gender constructions are used to prescribe negative social constructions on Muslim women and girls while erasing the existence of femmes, transwomen, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary Muslims based on assumptions that Muslims are inherently homophobic and queerphobic.

These negative social constructions portray Muslim women and girls as terrorists, terrorist sympathizers, supporters and potential terrorists who pose a threat to the security of the state on one end of the spectrum; they also depict Muslim women and girls as cultural representatives of Islam and Muslim communities, and hence women and girls' bodies are sites of control and domination. Simultaneously, Muslim women and girls are depicted as inherently oppressed and lacking any individual or collective agency. Therefore, violence against Muslim women and girls is often seen as normal and acceptable.

Gendered forms of violence that are inflicted on Muslim bodies include:

- *Sexual violence*
- *Gendered forms of surveillance and monitoring*
- *Torture*
- *Harassment*
- *Murder*
- *State reproductive control*
- *Coercion and violence*

Gendered Islamophobia exists on a continuum and is enforced and heightened through the interplay of violence that manifests at the institutional, systemic, and community-level.

While various definitions exist for Islamophobia, including terms like anti-Muslim racism, anti-Muslim discrimination, and anti-Muslim bigotry, any framework and definition endorsed by the federal government must prioritize the role of the state, institutions, government policies and laws as foundational

to the construction and proliferation of Islamophobia, including hate-motivated violence towards Muslim communities.

Section IV: Agency Level Policy Recommendations

General Agency Level Recommendations:

Our organizations believe it is vital for the White House Islamophobia strategy to be removed from the oversight and control of the National Security Council (NSC). Rather the White House Islamophobia strategy must be embedded within a framework centered on racial and social justice. Moreover, it should be managed and guided by entities within the White House and federal agencies responsible for enforcing civil rights statutes and policies. By disassociating the strategy from the NSC, we aim to diminish the racist link between national security and Muslim communities.

Any White House Islamophobia strategy must include the following key aspects:

- I. Establish a Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission to examine the historical injustices inflicted by structural and gendered Islamophobia on Muslim communities and communities perceived as Muslim by the government that focuses on domestic and global communities impacted by American militarism and violence. This includes documenting the human and financial toll experienced by BAMEMSA/SWANA communities. This effort should also involve an examination of the impact of Islamophobia on these communities prior to the events of 9/11.
- II. Acknowledge and accept responsibility for past harm inflicted on BAMEMSA and SWANA communities by the federal government as further elaborated in our recommendation for the five key pillars. This includes holding government officials who ordered, authorized, or participated in torture accountable. This includes releasing all information pertaining to the identities of anyone previously detained in CIA custody and public release of declassified information on the use of these policies, including the use of Black sites in the “war on terror.”
- III. Ensure that federal government agencies abstain from implementing tactics and policies reminiscent of the post-9/11 “war on terror” era. These include profiling, targeted immigration enforcement measures such as special registration and bans on migration from Muslim-majority nations, detentions, deportations, interrogations, surveillance, and infiltration of places of worship, educational institutions, student associations, and other establishments. Additionally, prevent and prohibit profiling based on nationality, ethnicity, faith, race, and immigration status.
- IV. Government agencies must vet individuals for affiliation with white nationalist or white supremacist—including anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian and racist groups before appointment or hire and make a commitment to refrain from hiring such individuals.¹²
- V. The White House should support efforts to repeal, revoke, and rescind laws, rules, and policies that criminalize and chill protected First Amendment activity, including protests and boycotts. This includes exercising agency discretion to refrain from laws that inhibit or criminalize free expression.

¹² Muslim Advocates (2020): Presidential Power Transition Memo. Accessed from https://muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Muslim-Advocates-Transition-Memo_FINAL.pdf

- VI. The White House should support efforts focused on repealing 18 U.S.C. §2339B of the material support statute.¹³
- VII. Release of all wrongfully detained prisoners under the “war on terror,” including the reunification of families who have been incarcerated and separated by deportations and incarceration due to such policies.
- VIII. Ensure domestic terrorism laws and statutes are not expanded under the guise of fighting white supremacy, hate crimes, pandemics, national emergencies, and/or natural disasters. This entails safeguarding against weaponizing and introducing new domestic terrorism laws, strategies, or initiatives framed as ‘violence prevention’ and employing threat evaluations or similar methods to target ‘terrorism,’ ‘extremism,’ and ‘radicalization.’ Such measures must not be utilized to target BAMEMSA communities or advocates for social justice.¹⁴
- IX. Establish a consultation and information-sharing mechanism for community-based organizations at national and local levels to engage with federal government entities.
- X. Establish a federal interagency task force to address the structural roots of Islamophobia and the ensuing detrimental state policies, such as the “war on terror,” stemming from such prejudice. This task force should be situated within a White House division dedicated to equity and justice, with involvement from civil rights departments across all federal agencies.
- XI. Be grounded in a justice-oriented framework that transitions away from emphasizing criminalization to investing in community-led approaches that do not rely on carceral responses.

Executive Office of the President:

- I. President Biden must call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and end U.S. support for the Israeli bombardment of Gaza, resume funding the United National Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), increase humanitarian aid to Gaza, cease supplying arms to Israel, and abide by international human rights obligations.
- II. President Biden must immediately close the Guantánamo detention center and end indefinite military detention.
- III. President Biden must end the practice of extrajudicial executions through the use of drones for surveillance and targeted killings.¹⁵
- IV. President Biden must pardon the Holy Land Foundation Five.¹⁶

¹³ Center for Constitutional Rights (2020) : A Rights-Based Vision For The First 100 Days. Accessed from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i5VCQfZoE80eTPWu5i4D-KMAk97L156TzRcOAI0kLQ0/edit>

¹⁴ [Abolishing the War on Terror, Building Communities of Care](#). Accessed from MuslimAbolitionistFutures.org

¹⁵ [Targeted Killing | American Civil Liberties Union](#). Accessed from <https://www.aclu.org/issues/national-security/targeted-killing>

¹⁶ See Human Rights Groups, “After Israel's Designation of Human Rights Groups as ‘Terrorists,’ Biden Should Release Palestinian-Americans Imprisoned Over Similar Claims, March 11, 2022, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/11/after-israels-designation-human-rights-groups-terrorists-biden-should-release>.

- V. President Biden should revoke Executive Order 13224, which grants the Secretary of State broad powers to designate individuals and groups as “specially designated global terrorists,” absent a meaningful burden of proof.
 - VI. Issue a Presidential Memorandum that:
 - A. Supports repeal of 18. U.S.C. § 2339B.
 - B. Directs the Department of Treasury to issue a general license clarifying there should be no liability for providing services, training, and/or expert advice and assistance, including advocacy, that is not under the direction or control of a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).
 - C. Directs the Department of State and the DOJ’s Civil Rights Division to review and assess the impacts of 18 U.S.C. § 2339A; 18 U.S.C § 2339B; and 18 U.S.C. § 2333 on First Amendment protected speech, advocacy, humanitarian assistance and religious exercise, and the statutes’ disproportionate impact on Arab and Muslim communities.
 - VII. President Biden must rescind all extreme vetting processes implemented under the Trump Administration or expanded during his Administration, including monitoring visa applicants’ social media.
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The U.S. Intelligence Community (IC):

- I. The Intelligence Community (IC) must stop weaponizing Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act¹⁷ against BAMEMSA communities, by surveilling and collecting communications of non-citizens and incidentally of citizens, without a warrant. The White House and IC should support congressional reform bills that would, at a minimum, require the government to: (a) obtain a warrant before searching the communications of persons in the U.S. and (b) close the data broker loophole by prohibiting law enforcement from purchasing the data U.S. persons that would otherwise require a warrant.
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U.S. Department of State (State):

- I. Three years after the President’s 2021 Proclamation¹⁸ to repeal the Muslim and African bans, the harmful impacts of the bans remain. State should reopen the cases of over 28,000 nonimmigrant visa applicants whose applications were denied pursuant to the Muslim ban. Their nonimmigrant visa applications should be reconsidered *de novo*, without regard to the prior denials.

¹⁷ 50 U.S.C. § 1809 et seq.

¹⁸ Proclamation on Ending Discriminatory Bans on Entry to the United States, January 20, 2021.

In February 2021, the President issued an Executive Order¹⁹ calling on the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to conduct a review of the applications of the bans by the prior administration and deliver a report to the President. State and the Department of Homeland Security should publicly share the findings of that ordered review and provide an action plan for how they will prevent future discriminatory bans, regardless of administration.

- II. State must abandon its practice of collecting social media identifiers and other information from visa applicants.

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ):

I. DOJ Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)

- A. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and its subsequent expansions, increase criminal penalties for gender-based violence (GBV) and its passage has not provided avenues to justice for many.²⁰ Rates of GBV have not reduced and prosecution efforts have only led to increased disparities where privileged perpetrators escape accountability. According to community-based input, forced partnerships with law enforcement to access services have also delayed justice and prolonged violence for many survivors who do not trust law enforcement and do not wish to see their communities or the persons harming them be criminalized.²¹ Our collective of community groups reject carceral solutions and OVC should shift its focus and resources from criminalization to community driven transformative justice models, and ensure that law enforcement, government, and other state funded institutions are not the only avenues for survivors seeking justice.
- B. While we advocate to address systemic issues by ending the over-reliance on law enforcement and criminalization, our recommendations must not be used to take away critical legal resources and remedies for individual survivors of violence.

II. DOJ Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)

- A. The current placement of OVW in the DOJ, as determined by VAWA, reinforces a criminal justice paradigm instead of one rooted in survivor justice. For BAMEMSA

¹⁹ Executive Order on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration, February 4, 2021.

²⁰ Goodmark L. Reimagining VAWA: Why Criminalization Is a Failed Policy and What a Non-Carceral VAWA Could Look Like. *Violence Against Women*. 2021 Jan 27(1):84-101. doi: 10.1177/1077801220949686. Epub 2020 Aug 20. PMID: 32819221.

²¹ See Syed, Ameena; White, Andrew; Nethercott, Emily; Escobar, Carolina; Van Zytveld, David; Raja, Darakshan; Gul, Rabiah; Qamar, Aysha; Mohajir, Nadiah; Safdar, Ayesha. (2017). Removing Roadblocks: Examining Barriers to Justice and Healing to Build More Victim-Centric Services For Muslim Survivors of Sexual Assault. HEART Women & Girls and Muslim American Women's Policy Forum. Accessed from <https://justiceresearch.dspacedirect.org/items/5a83fab9-1473-4b78-9add-be2b310f9b17>

Raja, D., & Collective, J.M. (2019). Almost Twenty Years Later: Lessons Learned from Critical Resistance and INCITE! on Building an Organizing Framework to Tackle Violence at the Nexus of State Violence, Gender-Based Violence, and Structural Islamophobia. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 47(3), 276-282. <https://doi.org/10.1353/wsq.2019.0057>.

communities, there is deep mistrust with law enforcement, and particularly the Federal Bureau of Investigations - a federal criminal law enforcement agency placed in the DOJ. While the programs and services offered through OVW may be survivor centered, culturally responsive, and critical for survivor healing, acquiring funding from OVW often requires grantees to name DOJ as the funding source. For communities impacted by state violence and the “war on terror,” the DOJ’s name on these services leads to suspicion, mistrust, and legitimate fears of improper information collection and sharing with other DOJ components. This creates a barrier for those seeking services and programming and a barrier for the service providers trying to reach the most vulnerable in their communities. OVW should be moved from the DOJ and placed within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- B. Acknowledging that VAWA plays a crucial role as the primary funder for various essential GBV services, any transition should guarantee sustained support for groups relying on vital funding channels providing life-saving services and shelters for survivors of GBV. Additionally, if individual survivors pursue legal action, they must receive robust and comprehensive legal and social assistance.

II. DOJ Civil Rights Division

- A. In 2023, the DOJ updated its “Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the Use of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Disability”²² and stated that federal law enforcement personnel “may not consider race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in law enforcement or intelligence activities” unless certain conditions are met. The DOJ excluded nationality as a protected characteristic despite long-standing community recommendations to include it. The DOJ should revise the Guidance to include nationality as a protected characteristic, ensure that federal law enforcement personnel are routinely trained on the Guidance, and ensure accountability when allegations of misconduct and civil rights violations are made.²³ The DOJ should eliminate any national and homeland security loopholes.²⁴
- B. Taking note of the significant increase in threats against Black, Muslim, Arab, Palestinian, and South Asian communities, the DOJ Civil Rights Division and Community Relations Service should consult with these communities about their needs and concerns. Efforts must be rooted in a transformative justice framework and must engage communities through an approach that recognizes the multigenerational harm of many government policies.

²² Department of Justice (May 2023) [Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the Use of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Disability](https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-05/Sec.%209%28e%29%20-%20Guidance%20for%20Federal%20LEAs%20on%20the%20Use%20of%20Protected%20Characteristics_FINAL%205.25.23_508.pdf). Accessed from https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-05/Sec.%209%28e%29%20-%20Guidance%20for%20Federal%20LEAs%20on%20the%20Use%20of%20Protected%20Characteristics_FINAL%205.25.23_508.pdf

²³ ACLU Acknowledges Improvements to DOJ Racial Profiling Policy, But Says Far More is Needed. Accessed from <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-acknowledges-improvements-to-doj-racial-profiling-policy-but-says-far-more-is-needed>

²⁴ ACLU. Joint Letter Critiquing 2023 Justice Department Racial Profiling Guidance. October 2023. Accessed from <https://www.aclu.org/documents/joint-letter-critiquing-2023-justice-department-racial-profiling-guidance>

- C. The DOJ Civil Rights Division should conduct outreach to BAMEMSA communities, open investigations into civil rights infractions, and track BAMEMSA-related complaints. They should also provide FAQs and Know Your Rights information in languages commonly spoken by BAMEMSA communities.

III. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)

- A. End the use of secret and discriminatory watchlists.²⁵ In 2019 there were 1.5 million people on the watchlist, 98% of whom are individuals with Muslim names.²⁶ The list has since grown to include 2 million people.²⁷ As an interim measure while the agencies move toward abandoning the practice altogether, agencies must provide notice, the reason for inclusion, and a meaningful right and process to challenge inclusion on the list.
- B. The FBI must cease its intrusive, discriminatory, and unconstitutional surveillance of Muslim communities – including using paid informants – that has broken trust, manufactured crimes, and deeply harmed our communities.
- a. The FBI’s use of informants or undercover agents who play a material role in the planning, prodding—including coercion—and/or execution of a would-be terror-related plot by young, indigent and/or vulnerable Muslims is so systemic that empirical studies have found that only 9% of Muslim counterterrorism defendants presented a true security threat.²⁸
 - b. The FBI’s Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG) should be amended to prohibit the deployment of informants into religious and community spaces;
 - c. The DOJ Office of the Inspector General should investigate FBI abusive informant coercion and recruitment practices and publish its findings and recommendations. This should include an assessment of the scope and impact of these practices, and the FBI’s compliance with even the minimal existing FBI Guidelines 28;
 - d. The No-Fly List and the Selectee List must be dismantled to prevent their abuse by FBI agents from interfering with individuals’ rights.

²⁵ See, e.g., ACLU, “The Watchlisting System Exemplifies the Government’s Post-9/11 Embrace of Biased Profiling,” (Sept. 9, 2021), available at <https://www.aclu.org/news/national-security/the-watchlisting-system-exemplifies-the-governments-post-9-11-embrace-of-biased-profiling>.

²⁶ CAIR, “Twenty Years Too Many, A Call to Stop the FBI’s Secret Watchlist,” (June 12, 2023), available at <https://www.cair.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/watchlistreport-1.pdf>.

²⁷ “U.S. terrorist watch list grows to 2 million people — nearly doubling in 6 years,” (Dec. 14, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-terrorist-watchlist-grows/>.

²⁸ See Sahar Aziz, “Race, Entrapment and Manufacturing 'Homegrown Terrorism,’” 3 *Georgetown L.J.* 381, 389 (2023), available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4460486.

- C. Following the recent compassionate releases²⁹ of the so-called “Newburgh Four,” the DOJ Office of the Inspector General should conduct a sweeping review of the FBI’s domestic operations targeting Muslims. Moreover, Attorney General, Merrick Garland, should publicly acknowledge the FBI’s wrongdoings against the “Newburgh Four,” commit that such operations will not occur again, and ensure appropriate policy changes are made.
- D. For example, the Attorney General’s Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations³⁰ permit the FBI to open assessments, e.g. investigative activity, without any particular factual predicate or reasonable indicia of criminal activity, and without supervisory approval. This intentionally weak standard should be corrected to prevent any further harm and the Attorney General should require reasonable criminal predicates and supervisory approval prior to the FBI commencing any investigative activity.
- E. Eliminate the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Crime Information Center’s (NCIC) Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File (VGTOF).³¹
- F. Develop independent and transparent review mechanisms for individuals to challenge inclusion on and achieve delisting from the FBI’s Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB).³²
- G. The DOJ should dismantle Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF), all their field offices and collaborative networks, including with state and local agencies and those established internationally, and any future such iterations that may go by other names.³³
- H. The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (DOJ OIG) must examine and publish findings on what types of information JTTF’s share and have shared with other federal agencies, including DHS, DHS Fusion Centers, and other components of DHS, and how these agencies have used this information.³⁴
- I. The DOJ OIG must (1) examine and evaluate the data that the FBI has collected and holds on U.S. and non-U.S. persons and purge all records which did not lead to predicated investigation; (2) evaluate and publish findings regarding violations of state and local law resulting from JTTF collaborations; (3) evaluate and publish findings about how many “assessments” are opened based in whole or in part on First Amendment protected activity; (4) evaluate and publish findings about how many “assessments” JTTFs open into those it classifies as engaging in so-called Black Identity Extremism, Islamic extremism, domestic terrorism, and other such classifications; and (5) evaluate

²⁹ [Judge Orders Release of Three of ‘Newburgh Four,’ Criticizing F.B.I. - The New York Times](#)
[Judge Orders Release of James Cromitie in ‘Newburgh Four’ Case - The New York Times](#). Accessed from <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/nyregion/newburgh-four-release-terrorism-case.html>

³⁰ [The Attorney General's Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations](#). Accessed from <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/docs/guidelines.pdf>

³¹ Center for Constitutional Rights. A Rights-Based Vision for the First 100 Days. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i5VCQfZoE80eTPWu5i4D-KMAk97L156TzRcOA1OkLQ0/edit>

³² See Above.

³³ Lifted from Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (2021). Unconstitutional and Unjust: Dismantling 20 Years of Discriminatory ‘National Security’ Policy Memo. Accessed from https://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final_9.11Memo-1.pdf

³⁴ See Above.

and publish findings regarding the disproportionate impacts of JTTFs on BAMEMSA, immigrant, and communities of color.³⁵

- J. The DOJ must publicly publish all Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) establishing JTTF partnerships between the FBI and local, state, tribal, and other federal agencies, the names of each agency participating in the JTTF across the country, and the number of officers from each agency assigned to the JTTF in a full- or part-time capacity.
- K. Develop and maintain a clear firewall to prevent information sharing, particularly about immigration status, between federal law enforcement agencies.

V. **Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)**

- A. The BOP should ensure consistent and equitable treatment of incarcerated persons. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that incarcerated Muslims can freely practice their faith with access to halal meals, prayer rugs, religious texts, and group prayer services. This includes access to meals during Ramadan that often fall outside of regular food hours. The BOP should work with Muslim communities to develop a plan to recruit and train more Muslim chaplains to serve incarcerated persons.
- B. Placement into specially designated Communications Management Units (CMUs) without notice violates due process rights and punitive monitoring of internal and external communications violates First Amendment protections. Incarcerated persons placed in CMUs should be moved to the general population and CMUs should be shut down.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

- I. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) should dismantle the use of Tactical Terrorism Response Teams (TTRTs) and rules-based screenings at ports of entry that have repeatedly and unnecessarily violated the civil rights of BAMEMSA travelers.
- II. CBP and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) also screen travelers at ports of entry and airports based on the FBI's terrorist watchlist, on other bases, and under different authorities. These duplicative efforts discriminately target BAMEMSA communities, subjecting travelers to secondary inspections, improper questioning about religious practice, electronic searches, and lengthy detention, all without a meaningful redress process for people to even understand why they are subjected to more screening. CBP and TSA's use of the watchlist in screening procedures, and their own screening authorities, should be reviewed and amended for redundancy and DHS should develop a new redress process that centers the experiences of communities most impacted by these aggressive screening tactics.
- III. DHS has repeatedly rebranded its ineffective and dangerous countering violent extremism work. DHS should now eliminate the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grants Program and its administering office, the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships.

³⁵ Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (2021). Unconstitutional and Unjust: Dismantling 20 Years of Discriminatory 'National Security' Policy Memo. Accessed from https://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final_9.11Memo-1.pdf

- IV. President Biden had promised to end the TVTP Grants Program, but the program has expanded under his watch, and has doubled in funding. These programs continue to target Muslims and BAMEMSA communities, especially in the current environment of commonly invoked anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian tropes. Furthermore, the program is still overly reliant on law enforcement despite promises to the contrary. For example, [a Brennan Center report](#) shows that DHS grants have not shifted to address white supremacist violence, which is the leading threat, and instead continue to target Muslims and other marginalized communities.

Only three of 37 grants in 2021, and two of 43 grants in 2022, did more than name-check white supremacy. Many still focus on Muslims.³⁶ The grants continue to support—and even increase funding—for law enforcement involvement. Many grants expanded the carceral system by converting trusted mental health professionals into informants. We recommend investing in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grants for communities that do not rope social welfare and mental health professionals into law enforcement functions.

- V. Prohibit the use of surveillance technologies, including facial recognition technology and the collection of biometric data. At present, DHS oversees the Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM), which facilitates the deployment, storage, and exchange of biometric data. OBIM serves as the primary provider of biometric identity services for DHS and manages the largest biometric database in the federal government. This system, known as the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT), is operated and maintained by OBIM. Currently, IDENT contains around 300 million unique identities and handles over 400,000 biometric transactions daily.³⁷
- VI. End the use of Fusion Centers.³⁸
- VII. Revise and update inadequate, faulty language and technology access for asylum seekers, while also preventing the misuse of apps for surveillance purposes. For instance, the CBP One App presents significant barriers for asylum seekers that adversely affect BAMEMSA asylum seekers, leading to higher rates of denial of admission of asylum claims at the border. Such app-based systems violate international law and asylum seekers’ rights to present themselves at the border to seek refuge.³⁹

³⁶ “For example, three grantees from 2020 and four grantees from 2021 continue to name ‘jihadism’ and ‘Islamic extremism’ as key focus areas.” Brennan Center, “DHS Rebrands and Expands Biased, Ineffective Countering Violent Extremism Program,” (April 27, 2023), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/dhs-rebrands-and-expands-biased-ineffective-countering-violent-extremism>.

³⁷ [Biometrics | Homeland Security](#). Accessed from <https://www.dhs.gov/biometrics>

³⁸ [Fusion Centers | Homeland Security](#). Accessed from <https://www.dhs.gov/fusion-centers>

³⁹ See Austin Kocher, “Glitches in the Digitization of Asylum: How CBP One Turns Migrants’ Smartphones into Mobile Borders,” (June 20, 2023), available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13060149>. In addition see letter by Reps. Grijalva, García, and Castro Urge DHS to Address Major Barriers to Asylum with CBP One App | Los Representantes Grijalva, García y Castro instan al DHS a abordar las principales barreras al asilo con la aplicación CBP One. Accessed here: <https://grijalva.house.gov/reps-grijalva-garcia-and-castro-urge-dhs-to-address-major-barriers-to-asylum-with-cbp-one-app/>

- VIII. Prevent U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) from instituting Denaturalization policies.⁴⁰ This includes canvassing federal agencies and dismantling any other offices whose primary or significant function is to focus on denaturalization.⁴¹
- IX. No longer permit CBP to use social media posts as a basis for denying entry.
- X. Purge all social media data and records collected since the implementation of the Extreme Vetting initiative implemented under the Trump Administration.
- XI. Eliminate USCIS’s Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program” (CARRP), a discriminatory, deeply harmful, and unnecessary program that has led to undue delays for many BAMEMSA applicants.
 - A. Direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to ensure that all field officers cease applying CARRP and factors used under the program to pending and future immigration benefit applications.
 - B. Expedite consideration of and adjudicate with final decisions immigration benefit applications currently pending and subject to CARRP, including all those subject to litigation; information obtained through CARRP must not be considered in applying the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).
 - C. Reconsider or reopen, if possible, the immigration benefit applications of those previously denied under CARRP and expedite renewed or newly filed applications of previously denied applicants; information obtained through CARRP must not be considered in applying the INA.
 - D. For those applications that are reopened or reconsidered and are denied, provide all the reasons for denial consistent with due process and 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(16). As prior immigration benefit denials may harm an individual’s future applications, DHS should instruct USCIS officials to prevent prior CARRP-based denials from adversely impacting any future applications.
 - E. The Administration should also closely review other policies and practices that are currently employed to halt the flow of Muslim immigration beyond CARRP.⁴²

U.S. Department of Education (Ed.):

- I. Muslim, Arab, Palestinian, and allied students supporting Palestine are being targeted and do not feel safe or supported on university and school campuses. They have been discriminated against by their universities, and physically attacked, doxxed and intimidated in efforts to

⁴⁰ [DENATURALIZATION AND REVOCATION OF NATURALIZATION](https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/denaturalization_pa.pdf). Accessed from https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/denaturalization_pa.pdf

⁴¹ Muslim Advocates, Presidential Power, (Nov. 2020), available at https://muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Muslim-Advocates-Transition-Memo_FINAL.pdf.

⁴² See above.

silence their advocacy for Palestinian rights and opposition to Israel’s genocide.⁴³ Given the widespread impact of this targeting, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in Ed. should *sua sponte* promptly open and comprehensively investigate allegations of violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964⁴⁴ for discrimination based on shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics, especially cases of reported anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination and hostile environment.

- II. Reject the codification of International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition in agency rules and affirm OCR's mandate to protect the rights of all vulnerable student groups. Ed. must refrain from utilizing or citing the IHRA or any similar definitions or justification in its rulemaking, policy guidance, or enforcement actions. Adopting such a definition or policy would encroach upon fundamental First Amendment rights, perpetuate anti-Palestinian racism, and contradict the intent of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which aims to safeguard marginalized student communities from discrimination and harassment. As noted in a letter by 16 civil rights organizations led by Palestine Legal, the utilization of IHRA and comparable definitions advocated by anti-Palestinian actors has resulted in numerous negative consequences. This includes prolonged investigations into faculty and student expression that undermine the principles of academic freedom. It has also resulted in widespread suppression of speech and protest concerning critical issues related to foreign policy and racial justice, frivolous legal actions that deplete the resources of universities and communities, restrictions on public expressions of mourning by students, jeopardy to scholarships, disruptions or cancellations of courses, limitations on student government participation, the omission of Palestine from educational curricula, and significant emotional distress and mental health repercussions from these circumstances.⁴⁵
- III. Ed. must provide guidance, resources, and training to universities to ensure the protection of Palestinians and their allies calling for Palestinian freedom in ways that do not contribute to the troubling rise of surveillance and policing of these communities. This includes students, teachers, and university staff targeted for their support of Palestine. Ed. should also issue clear guidance that schools should be discouraged from contacting FBI or law enforcement in the absence of actionable evidence, to promote a safe and bias-free learning environment.
- IV. Ed. should issue guidance that advocacy for Palestinian rights and criticism of Israel is protected speech under the First Amendment and does not constitute harassment; it represents a desire for justice by a colonized people who have legitimate criticism of a colonial state.
- V. Host listening sessions for affected students who can testify to incidents of anti-Palestinian discrimination and harassment.
- VI. Provide reports to community-based organizations on a quarterly basis about the cases opened, investigated, closed, and policy changes related to BAMEMSA communities.

⁴³ [Hon. Catherine E. Lhamon Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights US Department of Education](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/548748b1e4b083fc03ebf70e/t/65416bd823a85315b4d85402/1698786265201/2023.10.31+OCR+Letter.pdf). Accessed from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/548748b1e4b083fc03ebf70e/t/65416bd823a85315b4d85402/1698786265201/2023.10.31+OCR+Letter.pdf>

⁴⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.

⁴⁵ Palestine Legal. Reiterating call to reject IHRA and its underlying conflation of anti-Zionism and antisemitism that is causing severe anti-Palestinian racism. Accessed from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/548748b1e4b083fc03ebf70e/t/65aaa8b70566f016b04683fc/1705683174095/01.16.2024_OCR+IHRA+Letter_final

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):

- I. Civil rights organizations serving BAMEMSA communities have noted a spike in workplace discrimination complaints.⁴⁶ EEOC should improve access to its complaints filing process for workers of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian background to timely address allegations of religious-based and national origin discrimination in the workplace and should conduct more “Know Your Rights” outreach and engagements with these communities.
- II. EEOC offices should engage with community-based organizations in their local areas to better understand community needs and concerns. EEOC offices should conduct outreach to employers to ensure their compliance with anti-discrimination laws and their Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim employees.
- III. EEOC should issue commissioner charges as an inquiry into both individual and systemic discrimination against Arab Americans, Palestinian Americans, and Muslim Americans.
- IV. EEOC should issue a public letter reminding both public and private employers to be vigilant in the protection of employee rights and hiring process under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Both public and private employers should protect employees’ free speech as public employers are bound by the First Amendment and private employers should be bound by their free-speech codes, codes of conduct and social media policies that are equally applied to all employees.
- V. Issue guidelines on how field offices address discrimination claims related to Palestine speech, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian hate and Islamophobia, including examining whether speech by employees in a protected category is treated similarly as speech by those not in the protected category; disparate impact of social media policies, or other employer policies on protected groups, specifically Palestinian, Muslim and Arab; hostile work environment and discrimination related to racialized stereotyping, such as being called ‘terrorists’ or ‘extremists.’
- VI. Commit to training EEOC offices across the country on anti-Arab/Muslim/Palestinian hate in the workplace and agree to host listening sessions to give members of the public an opportunity to discuss their experiences and concerns.
- VII. Direct an investigation to gather data and information on employment discrimination and other retaliation against Palestinians, Muslims, and Arabs, including those perceived as having those identities, including but not limited to South Asians and Sikhs.
- VIII. Expedite case referrals, pre-complaint mediation and facilitate anonymity in filing to help individuals scared of retaliation; enable processes for civil rights organizations to contact EEOC to make direct filings; conduct regular meetings with civil rights organizations and community members impacted.

⁴⁶ “Anti-Muslim bias complaints up 178 percent at end of 2023: CAIR,” The Hill, (Jan. 29, 2024). Accessed from <https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/4435375-anti-muslim-bias-cair-israel-hamas-gaza/#:~:text=The%20Council%20on%20American%2DIslamic,the%20same%20period%20in%202022.>

- IX. Develop an interagency task force that brings various federal agencies together to address the overlap of employment with other civil rights issues such as immigration status.
 - X. The EEOC should provide materials and frequently asked questions in a range of languages spoken by BAMEMSA communities, including but not limited to Arabic, Urdu, Dari, Pashto, Punjabi, and Bengali.
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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

- I. Shortly following the October 7th attacks, a six-year-old boy, Wadee Alfayoumi was murdered, and his mother was stabbed by their landlord who attacked them because they were of Palestinian origin. Muslims who are Arab, South Asian, Black, as well as Palestinian tenants have faced threats and evictions from landlords, and prospective buyers have faced discrimination in purchasing homes for exercising their First Amendment rights, such as flying a Palestinian flag or expressing their religious beliefs. HUD must also exercise its Title VI authorities by investigating complaints, and opening investigations *sua sponte* to address the rising Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, and anti-Palestinian discrimination.
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U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA):

- I. The SBA should engage in significant and intentional outreach efforts to support BAMEMSA owned or controlled small businesses. This should include training on registration, certification, compliance, business development, funding, interpretation and translation assistance.
 - II. The SBA should offer immediate grants, loans, and financial support to small businesses within BAMEMSA and SWANA communities that face significant hardships as a result of Islamophobic violence and hate.
 - III. Introduce a dedicated Small Business Fund aimed at supporting BAMEMSA/SWANA communities, offering seed and growth capital to small businesses situated in economically disadvantaged areas, especially those owned by entrepreneurs from BAMEMSA/SWANA backgrounds.
 - IV. Offer economic assistance and funding to cooperatives and land trusts led by BAMEMSA/SWANA communities. This includes broadly defining small businesses and including cooperatives, land trusts, and other institutions that are supporting community wealth-building under the definition of small businesses.
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Section V: Conclusion

In conclusion, it is imperative that the federal government prioritize community-led demands in shaping the White House Islamophobia Strategy to ensure its effectiveness and prevent future harm. We firmly assert that combating Islamophobia demands an approach firmly anchored in justice, community engagement, and government accountability. In that vein we are requesting the following demands:

- I. The White House must share a draft of its Islamophobia strategy prior to its release for community input and comment, including with our coalition of organizations, and provide a minimum of four weeks for community input and feedback before finalization.
- II. The White House must share their implementation plan for the White House Islamophobia Strategy with the broader community and make these plans accessible to community organizations.
- III. Prior to adopting any official framework or definition of Islamophobia, the White House must engage in consultation with our coalition of organizations, ensuring a clear and open process for gathering input from community organizations.
- IV. The White House must share the contact information of individuals leading the development of this strategy within the White House and relevant agency leads responsible for executing the Islamophobia Strategy with community groups.
- V. The White House must develop an evaluation strategy on the effectiveness of the Islamophobia Strategy. This includes developing a community advisory group that includes grassroots organizations.

By embracing a framework that honors lived experiences and acknowledges the diverse impacts within Muslim and related communities, we can begin the urgent task of dismantling systemic barriers that harm Muslim communities and those racially perceived as such. Additionally, the government must take decisive action to dismantle policies that perpetuate Islamophobia while actively involving affected communities in decision-making processes. Instituting mechanisms for ongoing community input, bolstering research initiatives, and establishing dedicated task forces and commissions led by impacted communities are crucial measures toward achieving truth, reconciliation, and reparations.

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