

TALKING POINTS—Orlando Mass Shooting

(updated 6/13/16)

- This terrible attack is rightly called a “hate crime.” No hate crime can be tolerated against any community, ever. All of us must stand together in denouncing prejudice directed at any group.
- All Americans, and indeed all people, should be able to live their lives without fear of being targeted for their sexual preference, their faith, or the color of their skin.
- The LGBTQ community has stood side by side with the American Muslim community during challenging and difficult times. We stand together against hatred, violence and demonization of entire communities, and we honor the experiences and work of LGBTQ Muslims, who are living at the intersections of their LGBTQ identities and Islam. Today, we stand in solidarity with them and the entire LGBTQ community. [Credit: adapted from Muslim Advocates’ statement]
- The gun used in this horrific shooting was an AR -15, the same weapon used in the tragedies at San Bernardino and Sandy Hook. This is a pattern that cannot be allowed to continue. There have been 134 mass shootings this year alone. We need to come together as Americans and put an end to this ongoing tragedy.
- Religious, civic, and political leaders of every variety should stand together to denounce prejudice or violence that is directed at any group. Politicians who seek to exploit this tragedy demonstrate that they are not fit for leadership in this country and their exploitation should be renounced.
- Whatever warped justification the shooter may have claimed, his actions are a hate crime. He alone bears responsibility for his crime. His family, his faith and his community do not.
- Every religious tradition explicitly condemns the killing of innocent people. Murder knows no faith.
- Mass murder is committed with many twisted justifications. Dylann Roof, who murdered nine people in a South Carolina church, is a white supremacist; Robert Dear, who killed three at a Colorado Planned Parenthood clinic, holds fundamentalist religious beliefs; the San Bernardino shooters embraced violent Islamic extremism. We should treat all of these people as individually responsible for their actions and not unfairly judge all white people, or all religious fundamentalists, or all Muslims.
- This disgusting hate crime must not be compounded by additional hate crimes. The Muslim community, our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, and the broader LGBTQ community, understand what it means to be targeted. Over the past year, a taxi driver was shot in the back in Pittsburgh, and a woman was assaulted by two men outside of her children's school based solely on their faith. Following the San Bernardino shootings, a Muslim storeowner in New York City was attacked. All Americans should be united against bigotry and violence directed at any minority, whether it is against the gay, lesbian and transgender community or against American Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.
- The murder of innocents is condemned in every faith tradition, including Islam.

NOTE: If confronted with media questions on the "Muslim view" of homosexuality, we suggest the following:

The Muslim faith is very diverse and views on homosexuality are as varied and complex as they are among Jews, Catholics, Evangelical Christians and other denominations. There is no such thing as a "Muslim view" of homosexuality, but any decent person from any faith tradition should denounce this horrible hate crime – just as they should denounce any hate crime.