

Talking Points: 11/13 Paris Terrorist Attack (Updated)

- 1. This was not just an attack on Paris. This was an attack on our collective humanity, and we cannot allow these attacks to divide us against each other.**
 - These attackers' purpose is to sow fear and division and convince us that we cannot trust our neighbors. They aim to destroy our common humanity. We cannot allow violent extremists to dictate the terms by which we will live. By standing with our neighbors we repudiate these perpetrators' assumptions that violence will necessarily beget additional violence.
 - In times of crisis, people of good will must speak up in solidarity with those who are most likely to become the victims of backlash and violence over the coming weeks – specifically, Muslims in France and the rest of the world who are equally horrified by these attacks.
 - Parisians have already declared that they will stand united after this attack and will not allow this tragedy to divide or define their city. When we defend our neighbors, we stand united with Paris as a symbol of what is good and what is right after an attack.
- 2. Those who seek to leverage this tragedy for political gain should be ashamed. Now is the time to grieve, not turn people against each other on the basis of their faith, their ethnicity or their place of origin.**
 - Within minutes of this attack, some individuals used this tragedy to justify deportations, the suspension of other people's rights or in some cases, violence against innocent people. We cannot allow these statements to go unchecked. These statements are an offense to American values and they feed into the very fear the attackers hoped to generate.
 - Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities have all experienced backlash after attacks like these, and bigoted statements often lead to hate crimes against innocent community members. Elected officials and others who resort to hate speech have a responsibility to reject bigotry, not exploit it.
- 3. Rather than exploit this tragedy to foment anti-refugee sentiment, we must recognize that refugees from Syria and Yemen have been attempting to escape violent extremism.**
 - Some have argued that this attack was organized by Syrian refugees – a claim that is unsubstantiated and unlikely.
 - More likely, this is an example of the very violence that has been inflicted on innocent citizens in Syria, Yemen and other Middle Eastern nations. The

Syrian civil war and the barbarism of ISIS has killed more Muslims than members of any other faith. The refugee crisis is fueled by the kinds of violence Parisians witnessed on Friday night.

4. The world mourns for Paris and for those who were terrorized by Friday's attacks.

- Paris is still coming to terms with the attack. We are only just learning who the perpetrators were, who were victims, and what exactly happened. Paris will need time to grieve and the whole world should support Paris as it recovers from this horrific tragedy.
- Paris is a symbol of love, of brotherhood, and of light. The rest of the world turns to Paris for its art, its love, its food, its passion, and its vibrancy. Those characteristics are the exact opposite of the destructive cruelty of the murders that perpetrated these attacks. Celebrating the values of Paris is a powerful repudiation of this meaningless violence.
- When tested by a terror attack, we must stay true to our core values: freedom, equality, and the right to pursue happiness. We cannot allow ourselves to succumb to the attackers by abandoning our principles.

5. Now is not the time to abandon our civil liberties; it's the time to reaffirm them.

- As Americans, we should reaffirm the freedom of all people to worship any religion, to assemble, to speak freely, and to not be afraid. We cannot allow these attackers to provoke a response that takes away what we most hold dear. We all have the right to hold conversations in the privacy of our homes without the government listening in on conversations.
- Hate crimes and threats against Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Americans are already at the highest they have been since 9/11. We must support and defend the rights of all our people, even as we grieve for Paris. We have a responsibility to speak up and challenge speech that singles others out based solely on their religion or heritage; to stand up for the rights of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Americans when they come under attack; and to reject those who seek to exploit this tragedy for political gain.
- There is a temptation, when struck by terror or by grief, to lash out at anyone presumed to be an enemy. But refugees seeking to escape from terrible violence should not be blamed for the actions of the murderers in Paris and our American Muslim neighbors should not be subject to prejudice and violence.