

## Talking Points: 11/13 Paris Terrorist Attack

---

- 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.
  - According to recent reports, some vandals have already set a refugee camp on fire in France. This is a tragic development that only adds to the hurt and pain experienced in France on Friday.

**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.