



AMERICAN MUSLIM ADVISORY COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact Sabina Mohyuddin, Middle TN Program Manager

931-247-1962

pr@amactn.com

AMAC STATEMENT ON THE NEW ZEALAND MASSACRE AND VIGIL FOR THE VICTIMS

Nashville, TN: Yesterday's massacre at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand took the lives of 49 worshippers who gathered for Friday prayers, the holiest day of the week for Muslims. Over twenty worshippers were injured and many others were traumatized by this horrific and barbaric shooting. The American Muslim community across Tennessee stands in solidarity with the Christchurch Muslim Community and our Kiwi friends in their time of mourning and pray that God helps them through this senseless tragedy.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time people were targeted at their place of worship. In Pittsburg, Jews were attacked at their synagogue, in Charleston, Christians were attacked at an African American church and in Oak Creek, Sikhs were attacked at their gurdwara. These types of attacks are driven by racial, religious, and ethnic hatred and every elected official has a responsibility to condemn those in the strongest terms.

"We are devastated by the news coming out of Christchurch" said AMAC's Middle TN Program Manager Sabina Mohyuddin. "Friday prayers are a special time for Muslims and no one should have to worry about their safety when they worship. The reality is that we've seen a rise in hate crimes, bullying, discrimination and vandalism against Muslims across America. In January, the FBI uncovered a plot in which four students amassed weapons to attack a Muslim community in upstate New York. This is a real and present danger and we all have a responsibility to ensure the safety of our neighbors. We must condemn all forms of hatred including racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and xenophobia. We will have a vigil for the victims this Sunday at 1 Public Square from 5:30pm to 7:00pm and hope to see people come out and support the victims and condemn the hateful rhetoric that led to this tragedy."

Islamophobia is a 200 million dollar industry aimed at marginalizing Muslims and influences the rhetoric coming from the White House and many of our elected officials. Targeted violence and the hatred against Muslims that motivates it is unacceptable and must be challenged by people of all backgrounds. Here are several action steps that everyone can take to counter Islamophobia:

1. Meet a Muslim: Having a relationship with a Muslim breaks down stereotypes and builds respect among people.
2. Educate Yourself: There many informative books on Islam and Islamophobia including *American Islamophobia* by Khaled Beydoun and *Islamophobia, Race and Global Politics* by Nazia Kazi. AMAC is available for discussions on these topics.



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3. Challenge media narratives: Question the source of your information. Read and listen to news reports from different perspectives
4. Talk with Family and Friend: Oftentimes we hear troubling comments from people who are close to us. Now is the time to challenge the way people think about others who are different than them.
5. Be Present: Join activities and programs led by Muslims. Visit a mosque. Show your support this Sunday for the Muslim community by joining our Vigil For the Victims of the New Zealand Massacre.

Vigil For the Victims of the Mosque Massacre in New Zealand
Sunday, March 17, 2019
5:30 pm to 7pm
1 Public Square
Nashville, TN 37243

The American Muslim Advisory Council's mission is to foster mutual trust and respect among all people through civic engagement, community building, and media relations in order to protect all Tennesseans from prejudice and targeted violence.

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