

# Asra Nomani

- Asra Nomani is a Muslim activist and writer. A former staff reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, she made headlines in 2016 after writing in the *Washington Post* that she — a Democrat and “liberal Muslim” — voted for Republican Donald Trump.
- Nomani is a co-founder of a group called the **Muslim Reform Movement**. Launched in 2015 by a dozen Muslims, it seeks “reform for values of peace, human rights and secular governance.” Many Muslims have challenged the notion that Islam needs the “reformation” Nomani calls for.
- In 2010, Nomani argued for **religious and racial profiling of Muslims at airports**, claiming “there is one common denominator defining those who’ve got their eyes trained on U.S. targets: MANY of them are Muslim.” In 2012, Nomani stated she was “relieved that our country’s largest police agency was monitoring our Muslim community,” in response to the discovery that the NYPD had engaged in what the ACLU called “religious profiling and suspicionless surveillance of Muslims.”
- In June 2012, Nomani served as a witness for one of Rep. Peter King’s **hearings on “radicalization” of the American Muslim community**, hearings the ACLU referred to as “McCarthyism 2.0.”
- In 2013, Nomani published a piece in the *Washington Post*, asserting that the commonly-used Arabic phrase insha’Allah (if God wills), is “code inside the community for someone who is becoming hardcore” and that its usage is a “red flag.” In 2015, Nomani called on women to **“not wear the hijab”** in response to “World Hijab Day.”
- Nomani, along with the Muslim Reform Movement, protested former President Obama’s first visit to a mosque in 2016 calling it “tacit acceptance of a form of gender apartheid.” (In mosques, as in some other religious groups’ houses of worship, men and women pray in separate spaces.)
- In a February 2017 appearance on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, Nomani criticized the Women’s March for what she called “this apologetics, this standing shoulder to shoulder with **Muslims that are on the far right of the Westboro Baptist Church.**”
- In a 2015 interview on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, Nomani said that **“extremism” is “born out of a theology of Islam that we don’t want to accept.”** She also agreed with Maher who said it’s not a “small percentage who believe in some of the illiberal ideas that support terrorism”
- In a December 2016 interview on MSNBC, Ayman Mohyeldin asked Nomani: “Do you blame Muslims for the hate crimes that are happening against them in this country?” She responded, “I blame our Muslim organizations...who have refused to acknowledge the issue of extremism.” (American Muslim organizations have often condemned terrorism and violence.)
- In 2003, Nomani insisted on praying in the male-only main hall at her West Virginia mosque. In 2005, Nomani was an organizer of a **woman-led Muslim prayer** in New York City. These activities, and the controversy around them, were the subject of the documentary *The Mosque in Morgantown*.

**IMPACT:** A self-described Muslim reformer, Asra Nomani has supported policies that target Muslims as suspects on the basis of their religious identity.