

QUEBEC CITY MOSQUE SHOOTING

IMPACT: On January 29, 2017, a gunman opened fire on 53 worshippers at the Quebec City Mosque, killing six people and injuring 19 others. The shooter was inspired by Islamophobic and far-right rhetoric, and by opposition to pro-refugee policies in Canada.

- On the evening of January 29, 2017, **Alexandre Bissonnette**, a **27 year-old white Canadian university student**, approached the **Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec**, a mosque located in Quebec City, with a guitar case containing a semi-automatic .223-caliber rifle and ammunition. Bissonnette attempted to begin firing the rifle, but it jammed. Bissonnette switched to a 9mm semi-automatic Glock pistol. **In the span of two minutes Bissonnette fired 48 rounds**, reloading four times.
- **Six people were killed during the shooting:** Azzeddine Soufiane, 57; Abdelkrim Hassane, 41; Mamadou Tanou Barry, 42; Ibrahima Barry, 39; Khaled Belkacemi, 60; and Boubaker Thabti, 44. **Nineteen people were also injured, some critically**, including Aymen Derbali, Mohamed Khabar, and Saïd Akjour.
- **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described the shooting as a “terrorist attack,”** and the victims as “a group of innocents targeted for practicing their faith.” **Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard also described the shooting as a terrorist attack**, yet Bissonnette **was not charged with terrorism**. In March 2018, Bissonnette pled guilty to **six counts of first-degree murder and six counts of attempted murder**. Rejecting the Crown's request for six consecutive life sentences (150 years) without the possibility of parole, **in February 2019, Bissonnette was sentenced to life in prison, without the possibility of parole for 40 years**. In March 2019, Bissonnette's lawyers filed an appeal to reduce his sentencing time to 25 years before he's eligible for parole.
- Bissonnette **reportedly espoused anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, far-right, and anti-feminist views leading up to the attack**. He was also reportedly fascinated with the shooter who murdered nine African American Christian worshippers at a historic Black church in South Carolina; with President Donald Trump's Muslim Ban executive order; and with the French far-right.
- The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), with the support of over 70 Canadian Muslim associations and organizations and over two dozen community partners, are **calling for January 29th to be designated as a “National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia.”**
- In June 2016, **during the month of Ramadan, the same Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec was vandalized with a pig’s head** wrapped in cellophane, bows, ribbon, and a card that said “bonne appétit.”

This factsheet is published in collaboration between the Bridge Initiative and researchers at Wilfrid Laurier University. More information about this project can be found here.