

# JEANINE PIRRO

**IMPACT:** Jeanine Pirro is a right-wing political commentator who is currently the host of “Justice with Judge Jeanine” on Fox News. Pirro has used her show to spread misinformation about Islam and Muslims and has given airtime to anti-Muslim pundits such as Frank Gaffney and Brigitte Gabriel.

- In 1991, [Jeanine Pirro](#) became the first female [judge](#) in Westchester County, New York, and in 1994 she became the District Attorney for the county. Her show, **“Justice with Jeanine,” first aired on Fox News in 2011**. It was during her tenure as District Attorney that Pirro [met](#) with then-business mogul [Donald Trump](#). A 2019 *Washington Post* [noted](#) the connections between the two as Pirro’s “then-husband Al served as one of Trump’s real estate lawyers.” The [article](#) revealed that **Pirro has been friends with President Donald Trump for 25 years**.
- Pirro, described by a 2019 *Washington Post* [article](#) as a “longtime loyalist” of President Trump, has **used her Fox show, “Justice with Judge Jeanine,” to defend President Trump in the face of criticism and investigations**. A former senior White House official stated, “She is one of the few people who is loyal to him because of their history, not because she wants something from him.” In 2017, Pirro [met](#) with President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions in the Oval Office, where they all [discussed](#) the possibility of launching a special investigation into Hillary Clinton.
- Pirro has also **used her show to promote misinformation about Muslims and Islam by advancing anti-Muslim tropes such as the belief that Islam is uniquely tied to terrorism**. After the 2015 [Charlie Hebdo](#) attacks in Paris, France, Pirro stated that “[Islamic fanatics](#)” were coming to attack the U.S., specifically the nation’s Christian population. **Pirro stated, “And make no mistake -- as sure as I’m talking to you -- there will be efforts to limit our First Amendment -- our free speech -- to comply with Sharia blasphemy laws which call for death to those who slander the Prophet Muhammed.”** Describing how the invocation of “sharia law” is used to instill fear into American television audiences, *Vox* writer German Lopez [explains](#), “Fears of Sharia law play into the idea that Muslims are infiltrating the US and threatening to impose their ways on other Americans, so everyone should fear even Muslims who appear moderate.”
- On January 10, 2015, **Pirro delivered a seven-minute diatribe about “radical Muslim terrorists,” stating, “I’ve told you that you need to be afraid because they are coming for you, the ISIS assault, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria signals the beginning of the reverse crusade. They are coming for us. To them we are the infidels. My resolution? Airstrikes. Bomb them. Bomb them, keep bombing them, bomb them again and again and I don’t care how long it takes.”** Pirro argued that there is an increasing danger of an “Islamic cancer” that is metastasizing across the world, alleging that “they [Muslims] have conquered us through immigration...interfaith dialogue, and... by co-opting our leaders into a position of embarrassment.”
- In the same segment, Pirro **denounced the use of the term “Islamophobia” as a tactic used by the U.S. government to silence those who want to talk about terrorism**. Pirro [stated](#), “Our government’s response to the terror threat is to have interfaith dialogue, to try and understand and empathize with our enemy. And when they want to shut us up, they call us ‘Islamophobes.’” Expounding further on the topic, Pirro [exclaimed](#), “They can kill us, but we can’t hurt their feelings? I’m surprised there isn’t a new executive order that simply says ‘don’t offend Muslims.’”

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- Pirro has **used her show to give a platform to individuals with histories of propagating anti-Muslim conspiracy theories.** Speaking on Pirro's show on January 10, 2015, **"terrorism analyst" Steve Emerson promoted the "no-go zones" conspiracy theory**, which claims that Muslim populations in the West have created entire neighborhoods ruled under Sharia. Emerson stated "...in Britain it is not just no-go zones, there are actual cities like Birmingham that are totally Muslim, where non-Muslims simply don't go in. In parts of London there are actually Muslim religious police that actually beat and wound seriously anyone who doesn't dress according to religious Muslim attire." Pirro did not challenge any of the Emerson's claims during the show, instead, she agreed strongly with Emerson's analysis, stating, "You know what it sounds like? A caliphate inside a particular country." Upon hearing this claim, then-British Prime Minister David Cameron stated, "When I heard this, frankly, I choked on my porridge and I thought it must be April Fools' Day. This guy's clearly a complete idiot." Following social media ridicule, Pirro apologized for the inaccuracies in Emerson's arguments, stating, "Last week on this program, a guest made a serious factual error that we wrongly let stand unchallenged and uncorrected."
- In **January 2015, Pirro invited prominent purveyors of Islamophobia, Brigitte Gabriel and Frank Gaffney, onto her show** to discuss the topic: "Is Sharia Law Coming to America?" During the segment, Gaffney described Sharia as an "Islamic supremacist program," and claimed then-President Barack Obama was "trying to enforce Sharia blasphemy laws." Gabriel added that "with the rise of Islamic immigration we are starting to see the introduction of Sharia law."
- In February 2015, Pirro condemned comments made by then-President Barack Obama that insinuated that all religions are privy to perversion and extremism. A 2019 article by *Media Matters for America* noted that Pirro responded by listing attacks carried out by Muslim perpetrators "while ignoring that right-wing terror was considered the main terrorist threat in the U.S." Pirro then ended her statement by calling on the President to "Stop defending Islam, start protecting Americans."
- During an interview with *Fox News* host Sean Hannity in 2016, **Pirro promoted anti-Muslim tropes when she challenged the belief that Middle Eastern refugees can assimilate into life as American citizens.** She stated: "It is insane. It's insanity. But when we've got these guys beating their wives, you've got domestic violence, you've got them hating gays, and we are bringing them to this country. We think they're going to assimilate. They are not."
- During a July 2016 segment of *Fox & Friends*, **Pirro called for the surveillance of mosques and supported former House Speaker Newt Gingrich's call for all American Muslims to undergo a loyalty test.**
- In February 2017, Pirro invited ACT's Brigitte Gabriel to discuss President Trump's January 2017 Executive Order calling for a travel ban on all individuals from seven Muslim-majority countries. During the segment Pirro and Gabriel both claimed the order was not a religious ban. Pirro stated, "To be clear, we're not at war with Muslims. There is a ban against certain Muslims."
- On March 9, 2019, **Pirro questioned Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar's patriotism, suggesting that Rep. Omar's decision to wear a hijab signalled her opposition to the Constitution.** Pirro stated, "Think about it. Omar wears a hijab...Is her adherence to this Islamic doctrine indicative of her adherence to sharia law which in itself is antithetical to the United States Constitution?"
- Pirro was widely condemned for her comments on Rep. Omar and the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) called for a boycott of *Fox News*. A number of corporate advertisers pulled their ads

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from Pirro's show, with one stating, "We absolutely condemn Ms. Pirro's comments, which are offensive and completely contrary to our values." Although Pirro never explicitly apologized for her comments, *Fox News* elected to suspend Pirro for three weeks and issued its own condemnation of her comments.

- In response to her suspension, President Trump took to Twitter to defend Pirro and called on *Fox* to "Bring back @JudgeJeanine." Another individual who came to Pirro's defense was Gaffney who publicly voiced his support for her reinstatement. Speaking on the Lars Larson Show in March 2019, Gaffney lauded Pirro's monologue about Omar as "terrific," accusing Omar of adhering to "Sharia supremacism." Gaffney went on to describe Pirro as a "friend of mine" and a "great spokesperson for conservative values."

Bridge Initiative Factsheet