

**IMPACT:** Breitbart News is a right-wing media outlet described by its former chairman, Steve Bannon, as a “platform for the alt-right.” The platform strongly supported Donald Trump during the United States’ 2016 presidential election. Breitbart publishes false claims about Muslims, gives voice to anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, and amplifies anti-Muslim writers and activists.

- *Breitbart News Network*, popularly known simply as *Breitbart*, is a **conservative news website that was founded in 2005 by Andrew Breitbart** to become “the *Huffington Post* of the right.” Mr. Breitbart, a conservative political Internet publisher, was known for being a divisive and provocative figure. In 2009, he referred to the Holocaust Museum shooter as a “multiculturalist.” He **took part in the anti-Muslim protests against a Muslim community center erroneously dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque.”** Upon his death in 2012, **anti-Muslim writers Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer praised Breitbart as a “leader” and a “great and courageous warrior.”**
- In 2012, Steve Bannon became the executive chairman of the *Breitbart* media outlet. A 2016 article by *CBS News* noted that **under Bannon, Breitbart was “happy to embrace fringe beliefs like birtherism and play footsie with blatantly racist notions of black criminality.”** In 2016, **Bannon declared Breitbart, “the platform for the alt-right,”** a term coined by the white nationalist Richard Spencer. Bannon served as the executive chairman of *Breitbart* from March 2012 to August 2016, and again from August 2017 to January 2018. During the year between these periods, Bannon served as the White House Chief Strategist for President Donald Trump.
- During the 2016 presidential elections, **analysts described the platform as “Trumpbart”** due to its overwhelmingly positive coverage of the president. President Trump is reportedly an active reader of the site.
- In November 2016, when asked if *Breitbart* was associated with the alt-right, Alex Marlow, the company’s editor-in-chief, said, “I hesitate to deny it, but I hesitate to confirm it, also, because there is so much overlap in our audience.” In October 2017, a *Buzzfeed* article exposed **extensive ties between Breitbart, especially Milo Yiannopoulos, who was a senior editor of Breitbart at the time, and self-avowed white supremacists and Neo-Nazis.** The article reveals that Yiannopoulos contacted white supremacists and neo-Nazis for input on a *Breitbart* publication on the “Alt-Right” that **referred to white nationalists as “intellectuals” and “young, creative and eager” individuals.** Among them were Andrew “Weev” Auernheimer, Curtis Yarvin, and Devin Saucier. The article was subsequently reviewed by Alex Marlow and *Breitbart*’s co-CEOs Steve Bannon and Larry Solov before being published.
- Under Bannon’s leadership, **Breitbart published falsified claims about Muslims—like the debunked myth of “no-go zones.”** It also gave voice to the anti-Muslim conspiracy theory that Muslim organizations in the U.S. and Democratic politicians are connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. *Breitbart* has also amplified calls for the U.S. government to label the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization.
- *Breitbart* has **given a platform to numerous anti-Muslim figures including Brigitte Gabriel, Frank Gaffney, Pamela Geller, David Horowitz, Walid Phares, Ben Shapiro, Robert Spencer, and David Yerushalmi.** Some examples of *Breitbart*’s anti-Muslim content include: a May 2015 article that defended the “Draw Mohammed Cartoon Contest” hosted by Pamela Geller in Garland, Texas; a February 2016 short film which argued that “Shariah Law relegates women and non-Muslims to a lesser status [and] permits primitive punishments” and advanced the conspiracy theory of “Creeping Sharia by claiming that “Islamic groups are trying to get American courtrooms to recognize Sharia Law;” and a January 2016 article titled “Political Correctness Protects Muslim Rape Culture,” which insinuated that rape culture is inherent within Islam. This trend was highlighted in a 2017 article by *Atlantic* writer, Peter Beinart, who noted *Breitbart*’s “interest in Muslim

depravity,” as demonstrated by the number of articles the platform publishes with the “same, generalized, anti-Muslim sentiment.”

- In March 2013, *Breitbart* hosted a series of panels under the title **“The Uninvited,”** which featured **several anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant speakers banned from CPAC.** Among the panel topics advertised were “Global Jihad, Illegal Immigration, [and] the ongoing global persecution of Christians.” Panelists included Robert Spencer, Frank Gaffney, Pamela Geller, and Michael Mukasey, former Attorney General under President George W. Bush, who led the event “Civilizational Jihad and the Willful Blindness of America’s Elites.” In 2014, *Breitbart* **co-hosted a follow-up to the first series of panels entitled “The Uninvited II,” this time featuring Zuhdi Jasser, Rep. Trent Franks and Rep. Louie Gohmert.**
- In 2014, **Bannon hired Milo Yiannopoulos as senior editor of *Breitbart*.** Yiannopoulos has referred to himself as a **“fellow traveler”** with the alt-right and **“the only journalist [willing] to give them a fair hearing.”** He has also argued the alt-right is “not about white nationalism, it’s about Western ideas being the best,” employing a narrative popularly used to disguise Islamophobic prejudices. In **June 2016, Yiannopoulos planned a Gay Pride march on behalf of *Breitbart* through a “Muslim ghetto” in Sweden, referring to it as a “killer plan” and joking to Steve Bannon that he might “die doing this.”** His comments insinuated the common stereotypes that Muslims are intolerant and inherently violent.
- A 2015 *Breitbart* article defended then-Presidential candidate Donald Trump’s claims that **“thousands and thousands of people [Muslims] were cheering” on 9/11.** The article promoted the false claims, which were debunked by numerous reputable news sources.
- In June 2017, a *Breitbart* editor, Katie McHugh, tweeted that “there would be no deadly terror attacks in the U.K. if Muslims didn’t live there.” When Iranian-American actor Pej Vahdat responded to her tweet with “You’re a real moron,” McHugh fired back with “You’re an Indian,” incorrectly identifying his ethnicity in a racist attempt to insult him. Shortly afterwards, McHugh stated, “*Breitbart News* fired me for telling the truth about Islam and Muslim immigration.”
- In **December 2017, then-director of *Breitbart News* London Raheem Kassam stated there is a “correlation between Islam and mental health” as pertains to terrorist attacks.** Moreover, in March 2016 Kassam published an article describing young Muslims as “ticking time bomb[s].”
- In February 2018, *Breitbart* tweeted, “Grampa, what’s a Super Bowl? Well, lil Muhammad, back when the kuffar ran things, they stitched up filthy pig skins, moved them around painted lines, and shoved each other. There was secular music and alcohol -- A very haram affair!” The tweet was promptly deleted for not “[meeting] ... editorial standards.” In response, a representative from the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said, “We don’t consider [*Breitbart*] a media outlet, we consider them an anti-Muslim hate group.”
- *Breitbart* has **published numerous articles claiming that the Muslim Brotherhood has “infiltrated” the United States.** A 2019 article featured Zuhdi Jasser speaking about the need to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a foreign terrorist organization. In the interview, **Jasser referred to Congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib as “radical Islamists,” and claimed that Rep. Omar’s district has the “highest radicalization rate for Somali refugees going to fight jihad.”** In another 2019 *Breitbart* article, Jasser claimed the two Muslim Congresswomen were “normalizing” Islamism in American politics and stated, “Our community has a deep radicalization problem. It has a theocracy problem.”

- Writers for *Breitbart* have **repeatedly criticized former President Barack Obama for “sympathizing with Muslims.”** For *Breitbart*, the former President’s condemnations of Islamophobia in the wake of terrorist attacks like the [San Bernardino shooting](#) amounted to supporting terrorism. A January 2016 *Breitbart* [article](#) referred to Muslims as “the group most-protected by American elites,” and **identified denunciations of Islamophobia by public officials to be “propaganda about discrimination.”**
- *Breitbart* is also [known](#) for its **promulgation of “fringe, often evidence-free theories — including the accusation that former President Barack Obama wiretapped Trump’s phones.”** In March 2017, *AP News* [reported](#) that *Breitbart* was behind Trump’s series of unfounded tweets accusing former President Barack Obama of wiretapping Trump’s phones during the campaign. Most recently, *Breitbart* has [advanced](#) the “Deep State” conspiracy theory, the idea that “a clandestine network of state and non-state actors are working to undermine the Trump administration.”
- In their book [Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics](#), Harvard professors Yochai Benkler, Rob Faris, and Hal Roberts found that during the 2016 presidential election, *Breitbart* was able to make immigration the Republican Party’s main election agenda. It did so **through a “steady flow of misleading stories that associated immigration with terrorism, the spread of incurable disease, criminality, and abuse of the welfare system.”** The book also discusses how **“Islamophobia allowed Breitbart to serve as a link between the frank racism and anti-semitism of the white nationalists and the more muted racial anxiety of the more mainstream white- and Christian-identity pillars of the Republican coalition.”**
- Some of *Breitbart*’s other articles include [“Hoist It High and Proud: The Confederate Flag Proclaims A Glorious Heritage.”](#), [“Bill Kristol: Republican Spoiler, Renegade Jew”](#) (which was written by [David Horowitz](#) and [widely criticized](#) as anti-Semitic), [“Birth Control Makes Women Unattractive and Crazy.”](#) and [“Gabby Giffords: The Gun Control Movement’s Human Shield.”](#)
- In August 2019, *The Wrap* [reported](#) *Breitbart* had broken its 27-month traffic loss streak. The website reported that “monthly traffic on *Breitbart* plummeted nearly 72% from [17.3 million](#) in January 2017, when Trump took office, to 4.9 million in June 2019.” By September 2018, *Breitbart* had reportedly lost [4,000 advertisers](#) due to a social media campaign centered around exposing their sexist and racist content.
- Despite *Breitbart*’s [history](#) of [inaccurate](#) and [incendiary reporting](#), **Facebook announced in October 2019 that it would be including *Breitbart* as a source in Facebook News** — a curated section on the platform that will partner with news publishers.
- American [hedge-fund billionaire](#) Robert Mercer initially [invested](#) \$10 million into *Breitbart*. Mercer was one of Donald Trump’s [biggest](#) financial backers and he and his daughter, Rebekah Mercer, have also [invested](#) in numerous other organizations that promote Islamophobia.
- In January 2018, Bannon [stepped down](#) as executive chairman of *Breitbart* following pressure from Rebekah Mercer, who disagreed with a number of [comments](#) Bannon made questioning President Trump’s mental fitness and accusing Donald Trump Jr. of treason. In a [statement](#), Mercer cut ties with Bannon, declaring, “I support President Trump and the platform upon which he was elected ... [My family and I] do [not] support [Bannon’s] recent actions and statements.”