

DONALD TRUMP: PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

IMPACT: The 45th President of the U.S., Donald Trump has implemented anti-Muslim policies and nominated and appointed individuals to his administration with a history of anti-Muslim animus. He has also used his Twitter to amplify and propagate anti-Muslim rhetoric. Trump's white nationalist, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigration rhetoric has been cited as inspiration in numerous acts of violence against Muslims, immigrants, Jews, and people of color.

- **In January, March, and September 2017, President Trump issued two Executive Orders and one Presidential Proclamation barring the entry of immigrants and non-immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries.** The Muslim ban was temporarily halted multiple times by courts, and to date it has faced 100+ legal challenges. In December 2017, the Supreme Court allowed the latest version of the Muslim ban to go into effect, and **in June 2018 the Supreme Court ruled in Trump v. Hawaii that the current, third version of the Muslim ban did not violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and did not exceed presidential authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act.** One of the key rationales for this decision was the addition of a “waiver system” which would allow certain individuals to apply for an exemption to the ban. However, U.S. consular officials have claimed that “the waiver process is a fraud” and as of mid-2019 only 5.1% of all applicants for a waiver have been issued a visa. In her dissenting opinion for *Hawaii v. Trump*, Justice Sotomayor stated, “The words of the President and his advisers create the strong perception that the Proclamation is contaminated by impermissible discriminatory animus against Islam and its followers.” **As of November 2019, the Muslim ban is still in effect, and has had a devastating effect the lives of those it impacts.**
- **Following a terrorist attack in London in June 2017, Trump attacked the city’s mayor, Sadiq Khan, in a number of tweets and used the attacks to justify his Muslim ban.** In November 2017, **Trump used the moments following a terrorist attack in New York involving a Muslim perpetrator to push for stricter immigration policies, promising** “to end the Diversity Visa Lottery Program” and “chain migration.”
- In August 2017, a white supremacist demonstration in Charlottesville, Virginia turned deadly after one of the participants rammed his car into a group of counter-demonstrators. Participants in the “Unite the Right” rally included white supremacists, Klansmen, neo-Nazis, and various militias. The demonstrators shouted racist and antisemitic slogans including “blood and soil,” a phrase drawn from Nazi ideology, and “Jews will not replace us.” In response, Trump stated, “We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides. On many sides.” **In the following days Trump again commented, stating, “I think there is blame on both sides.” In a press conference about the rally, Trump defended the “white nationalists who protested in Charlottesville,” saying they included “some very fine people.”**
- **In November 2017, Trump retweeted anti-Muslim tweets from the far-right, ultranationalist group, Britain First.** Following this, a *New York Times* op-ed stated, “No modern American president has promoted inflammatory content of this sort from an extremist organization.” In response to Trump’s action, the Prime Minister of Britain stated it was wrong of Trump to retweet the group, which “seeks to divide communities by their use of hateful narratives that peddle lies and stoke tensions.”
- In February 2018, **Trump signed a national security memorandum to establish the National Vetting Center, a “collaborative, interagency effort to provide a clearer picture of threats to national security, border security, homeland security, or public safety posed by individuals seeking to transit our borders or exploit our immigration system.”** Journalists and critics have pointed out that **these policies could target Muslims on the basis of religious identity alone.**
- **In July 2019, Trump stated in several tweets that four U.S. Congresswomen of color, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Ayanna Pressley, should “go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came.”** All of these Congresswomen are U.S. citizens and three of the four were born in the United States. Two of them, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, are Muslim. These tweets drew widespread criticism, with many noting that the phrase “go back to where you came from” has a long, racist history, and that the U.S. government officially considers it discriminatory harassment in employment. **At a Trump campaign rally in North Carolina the same month, the crowd chanted, “Send her back,” referring to Congresswoman Omar. Trump let the chants carry on for thirteen seconds, and the next day described the crowd as “incredible people ... incredible patriots.”**

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- Trump has repeatedly targeted Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, one of the first two Muslim women elected to Congress in 2018. **In April 2019, Trump posted a video that interspersed footage of Congresswoman Omar with shots of the Twin Towers on 9/11. After the post, Omar issued a statement saying that she had received an increased number of death threats, many of which specifically referenced the video.** In his targeting of Omar, Trump has been repeatedly criticized for mischaracterizing Omar's words. For instance, Trump accused Omar of praising and supporting al-Qaeda, when in fact Omar condemned the organization as "evil" and "heinous" in the very same interview that Trump had been referencing.
- In March 2019, **Fox News host Jeanine Pirro was suspended for her comments that Congresswoman Omar is un-American because she is Muslim and wears 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?"** Trump then tweeted demands to "**bring back**" Pirro.
- **Trump's targeting of Congresswoman Omar is reportedly a key part of Trump's 2020 election strategy, according to reporting in the *New York Times*.** Journalists such as *The Guardian's* Sabrina Siddiqui, *The Atlantic's* David Graham, and *AP's* Steve Peoples and Zeke Miller claim that **Trump's campaign intends to use anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric as a political tool to rally his base and stoke fear against his opponents. Some of Trump's early online ads have already targeted Omar.**
- **Trump has on multiple occasions retweeted Katie Hopkins, a British media personality with a history of spreading misinformation and who has called for a "final solution" for Muslims.** In July 2019 he retweeted tweets mocking Sadiq Khan, the Muslim mayor of London, calling him "incompetent" and calling London "Londonistan." Another tweet referenced Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, asking, "**Are you going to choose socialists, choose ISIS, choose the Palestinian flag, choose Cair? Or are you going to choose to Make America Great Again?**" In 2015, **Trump commended Hopkins' "powerful writing on the U.K.'s Muslim problems."**
- **Regarding the migrant crisis in Europe, Trump has claimed that Muslim migrants and refugees from the Middle East have increased crime levels and have "strongly and violently changed" the culture of places like Germany.** *The New York Times* fact checker called the former claim false and the latter misleading. When Trump made similar comments in the U.K., stating that migration has "changed the fabric of Europe and, unless you act very quickly, it's never going to be what it was and I don't mean that in a positive way," *Vanity Fair* pointed out that this rhetoric is similar to that found in many white nationalist circles, and was received very positively by far-right groups in the U.K. An analysis of anti-Muslim propaganda in Europe and the United States found that **Trump's "repeated invocations of mayhem in Europe" demonstrates how central anti-Muslim sentiment has become in far-right circles, and how central Trump has been in spreading it.**
- **Trump has nominated and appointed as members of his administration people who have exhibited anti-Muslim animus, such as Stephen Miller as White House senior policy advisor, Steve Bannon as White House chief strategist and senior counselor, Kellyanne Conway as White House counselor, Jeff Sessions for Attorney General, Mike Pompeo for Director of the CIA and then for Secretary of State, Sam Brownback as U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, John Bolton for National Security Advisor, and Ken Cuccinelli for Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He also nominated Gina Haspel for Director of the CIA, who previously oversaw a CIA 'black site' in Thailand where Muslims were detained, interrogated, and tortured.**
- **As president of the U.S., Trump has furthered white nationalist ideology about immigrants of color. According to August 2019 reporting in USA Today, since 2017 Trump has used the words "predator," "invasion," "alien," "killer," "criminal" and "animal" at his rallies while discussing immigration more than 500 times. According to August 2019 reporting in The Guardian, since January 2019 the Trump campaign has used the word "invasion" to describe migrants and asylum seekers at the US-Mexico border in 2,199 Facebook ads.**
- **Trump's rhetoric is directly linked to acts of violence.** Reporting by *ABC News* has identified "**at least 36 criminal cases where Trump was invoked in**

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direct connection with violent acts, threats of violence or allegations of assault” since August 2015.

- In August 2017, Trump tweeted, “Study what General Pershing of the United States did to terrorists when caught. There was no more Radical Islamic Terror for 35 years!”
- In January 2018, Trump issued an executive order to keep the Guantánamo Bay military prison open. His administration has also reportedly floated the idea of detaining migrant children at the prison, as well as transferring additional military prisoners.

Bridge Initiative Factsheet