



# Islamophobia and the Political Rise of Zohran Mamdani

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the surge of Islamophobia directed at Zohran Mamdani's historic run for Mayor of New York City. Drawing on news reports, public statements and actions by prominent groups and politicians, media framing, and social media discourse, the report investigates and analyzes the anti-Muslim bigotry during this time period. It contextualizes Islamophobia within the wider post-9/11 environment and observes that during Mamdani's run and following his win, anti-Muslim rhetoric intensified across all sectors of society. It uncovers how the age-old stereotypes and tropes depicting Muslims as dangerous, foreign, untrustworthy, and disloyal were used to delegitimize Mamdani's run.

Further, the report highlights a new trend that has surfaced where politically active Muslim Americans are smeared as "antisemites," a tactic which was employed by pro-Israel and Zionist voices against Mamdani due to his public stance for Palestinian rights and self-determination. While the case of the "Muslim antisemite" is not an entirely new Islamophobic stereotype, its prominence in the campaign against Mamdani seems linked to the growing international criticism of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Additionally, the anti-Muslim backlash to Mamdani's campaign was not restricted to the United States, as international politicians and government officials also spread hate and disinformation about Mamdani online. The level of anti-Muslim bigotry during Mamdani's election is yet another example today of the normalization of Islamophobia in the United States and around the globe.

## METHODOLOGY

This report incorporates a multi-source qualitative analysis to investigate and document the heightened levels of Islamophobic rhetoric during the 2025 NYC mayoral electoral campaign of Zohran Mamdani. The methodology involves four categories of evidence: public statements by prominent politicians and influential voices, news reports, social media discourse, and media framing. The analysis of all three categories involves identifying patterns and recurring themes related to Islamophobia. The evidence also cites existing reports and quantitative analysis from digital rights organizations.



# INTRODUCTION

In November 2025, Zohran Mamdani made history becoming the first ever Muslim and South Asian elected to be the Mayor of New York City. Upon election, Mamdani became the youngest mayor of the city since 1892. His campaign centered on the needs of everyday New Yorkers, with policy proposals aimed at freezing rent, providing free public transportation, and overall tackling the cost of living in the city. While Mamdani made affordability the centerpiece of his campaign, his opponents and critics from across the political spectrum made Mamdani's religious identity the center of theirs.

There are several reports that document the rise of Islamophobia during election cycles, demonstrating how anti-Muslim racism has become an established electoral strategy. This was solidified during the 2016 Trump campaign, where demonizing Islam and Muslims was the core strategy, with then-presidential candidate Donald Trump promising to institute a Muslim registry and ban Muslims from the country. It is therefore even more historic that nearly ten years after Trump announced his intention to institute a Muslim ban, a young Muslim Democratic-Socialist was elected to lead the country's most populated city. It was also significant in the level of Islamophobia aimed at Mamdani from politicians, media networks, influential commentators, and even venture capitalists. Alongside this, anti-Muslim rhetoric flooded social media platforms, demonstrating not only the mainstreaming of bigoted and hateful ideas but also the failure of social media companies to take the problem of anti-Muslim racism seriously.

## Brief overview of Islamophobia in U.S. elections

*“For longtime observers of American politics, the ferocity of the attacks may be shocking but their themes are depressingly familiar, especially after the 9/11 attacks. The playbook targeting Mamdani – questioning loyalty, invoking terrorism and weaponizing faith – has been deployed against Middle Eastern and Muslim candidates and officials for nearly two decades.” (Guardian)*

Since the deadly September 11, 2001 attacks, Islamophobia has been instrumental in election cycles. There are several reports demonstrating the rise in hate crimes and anti-Muslim attacks during election cycles as politicians employ anti-Muslim rhetoric in their campaigns in an effort to drive fear into the public and gain their support. The Institute for Social Policy & Understanding (ISPU) routinely found that “Islamophobia spikes not after a violent act, but rather during election campaigns and political events, when anti-Muslim rhetoric is used as a political tactic to garner support for a

specific candidate or policy.” A 2019 report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), MPower Change, and JetPac found that Islamophobia within U.S. politics came to the forefront during the 2010 manufactured controversy around the building of a Muslim community center (Park 51) near the site of the World Trade Centers. Park 51 (originally named Cordoba House) was a development originally envisioned as a 13-story Islamic community center and mosque in Lower Manhattan, New York.

The constructed alarmism around the construction of this community center, dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque,” propelled right-wing anti-Muslim voices like Pamela Gellar and Robert Spencer, into national politics, warning of the threat of “radical Islam.” There were protests in the city and increased media coverage across the country. At the same time, a coordinated campaign by other anti-Muslim voices like David Yerushalmi and Frank Gaffney (founder of the Center for Security Policy) stoked fears about a “Sharia” takeover. During this time, national midterm elections took place, giving rise to the Tea Party movement in national politics. Many of its members, such as Allen West and Michelle Bachmann, capitalized on the growing anti-Muslim sentiment as part of their electoral strategies.



Image: Protest against the planned Park51 Islamic Center in New York City in 2010

## INTRODUCTION

Following the attacks in 2001, the U.S. government brought on measures vastly expanding executive power under the pretext of security, emphasizing that these actions were needed to protect American citizens from terrorism. Many of the domestic policies that immediately came into effect involved human rights violations that targeted Muslim Americans. This included the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, surveillance of mosques, Muslim organizations, and the wider Muslim American community, and the shutting down of Muslim-led charities.

When it came to foreign policy, Islamophobic beliefs and attitudes were foundational to the U.S.'s "Global War on Terror," a borderless and timeless war that involved the invasion of two countries (Afghanistan and Iraq), destabilized the region, and has killed an estimated 4.5 million to 4.6 million – a figure that continues to mount as the effects of conflict reverberate. The Islamophobic logic used to defend these policies and actions by the U.S. government, framed Muslims as predisposed to violence and pointed to Islam as the root cause of terrorism. This racialized logic is built on centuries of xenophobic and orientalist stereotypes and tropes, depicting Muslims as dangerous, violent, untrustworthy, uncivilized, misogynistic, etc. It results in the dehumanization of Muslims, leading to little to no pushback when it comes to rights violations or mass violence against Muslims (both at home and abroad).

Islamophobia in the 2025 NYC mayoral election was not new. It consisted of the same recycled stereotypes and tropes that had been instrumentalized for over 20 years.



A man holds a sign that reads "I have a dream to live without fear from surveillance" during a Martin Luther King Day march against Islamophobia in 2017. [Andrew Lichtenstein / Corbis via Getty Images file]

# ZOHRAN MAMDANI

Zohran Kwami Mamdani is a 34 year-old Ugandan-born, South Asian, Muslim Democratic-Socialist American politician who was little known outside New York prior to his mayoral campaign. Before entering politics, Mamdani worked as a community organizer and a foreclosure prevention counselor. He was elected to New York's State Assembly representing the 36th district in November 2020, becoming the "first south Asian man, the first Ugandan, and one of only three Muslims to ever serve in the body."

Interestingly, Mamdani's background is tied to the study of Islamophobia through his father, Columbia University professor Mahmood Mamdani, author of Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (2004). The book explored political Islam and post-9/11 discourse, when Islam became a political category rather than religious experience, and thus resulted in differentiating "good Muslims" from "bad Muslims," rather than terrorists from civilians. In this politically constructed binary, the "good Muslim" is peaceful, pro-Western, "moderate," secular, etc., whereas the "bad Muslim" is violent, anti-Western, fundamentalist. Mamdani's mother is the acclaimed Indian-American filmmaker Mira Nair, whose rolodex of films includes *Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*, and *Monsoon Wedding*.



*José A. Alvarado Jr. for The New York Times*

## Timeline of the mayoral campaign

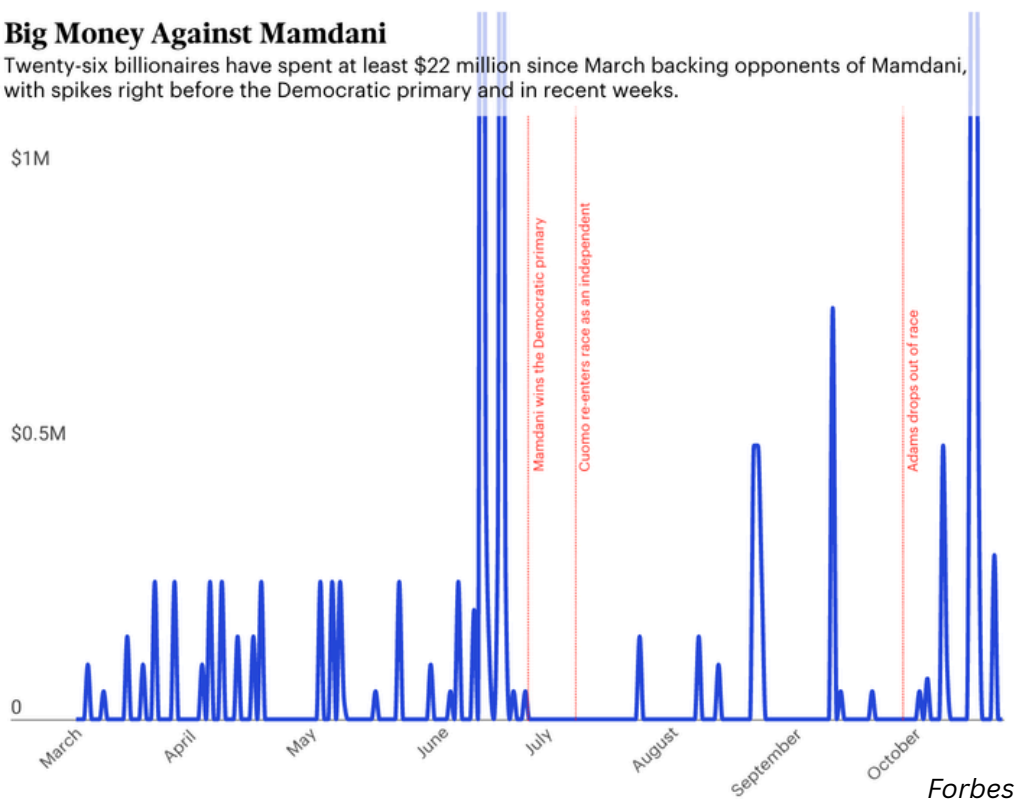
In May 2025, Emerson College Polling revealed that support for Mamdani increased from 1% to 23% from February to May. Mamdani's core message focusing on affordability and the rising cost of living, directly addressing an issue that nearly half of NYC voters (49%) reported experiencing, helped him surge in the polls.

To connect with the average New Yorker, Mamdani returned to classic, grassroots campaigning, involving 90,000 volunteers taking the message to the streets and knocking on millions of doors. This personal outreach was paired with a savvy social media strategy that used creative and trendy videos to showcase both Mamdani's personality and his policy proposals in engaging and accessible ways. All of this translated to a success in the primaries in June 2025, when Mamdani shocked establishment politicians by beating Andrew Cuomo 56% to 44% in the final round of ranked choice voting, becoming the Democratic nominee.

As Mamdani's election campaign continued to gain momentum and popularity, so too did the attacks against him from politicians and influential voices. An October 2025 Forbes piece reported that 26 members of US billionaire families spent over \$22 million in opposition campaigns against Mamdani. Instead of critiquing his policy positions or offering alternative solutions, these opposition campaigns largely embraced scare tactics to bolster their anti-Mamdani messaging.

### Big Money Against Mamdani

Twenty-six billionaires have spent at least \$22 million since March backing opponents of Mamdani, with spikes right before the Democratic primary and in recent weeks.



While Mamdani himself steered clear of making identity his central selling point, his opponents zeroed in on it. While Islamophobia during election season isn't new, what differentiated this cycle was the level of vitriol, from the digital sphere to international voices, all engaging in anti-Muslim bigotry.

A few weeks before election day, Mamdani voiced his concerns about the level of Islamophobia targeting him as well as Muslim New Yorkers, at one point getting emotional as he spoke about the death threats targeting him and his family. Mamdani had to increase his personal security due to the level of threats against him. Following his primary win, the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force announced that it was investigating multiple death threats against Mamdani, including a threat to blow up his car. In September 2025, authorities charged a man from Texas for making "terroristic threats" against Mamdani, including calling him a "terrorist" who is "not welcome in New York or in America," along with saying "Muslims don't belong here" and writing "I'd love to see an IDF bullet go through your skull."

Just under two weeks before election day, Mamdani gave a historic press conference in front of a mosque in the Bronx, where he condemned the racist attacks against him and criticized "political opponents for weaponizing religion, while pledging to no longer hide his faith."

Shortly after this, Mamdani published a six-minute video on his social media platforms directly calling out the Islamophobic rhetoric that had marred the campaign. It was a powerful message that quoted the anti-Muslim racist remarks of his opponents, as well as captured how everyday Muslim New Yorkers live in fear due to rising hate crimes against them.

*“I thought that if I could build a campaign of universality, I could define myself as the leader I aspire to be, one representing every New Yorker, no matter their skin color or religion. I thought if I worked hard enough, it would allow me to be that leader. And I thought that if I behaved well enough or bit my tongue enough in the face of racist, baseless attacks while returning back to my central message, it would allow me to be more than just my faith. I was wrong. No amount of redirection is ever enough. The dream of every Muslim is simply to be treated the same as any other New Yorker. And yet, for too long, we have been told to ask for less than that and to be satisfied with whatever little we receive. No more. For as long as we have lived, we have known that no matter what anyone says, there are still certain forms of hate acceptable in this city today. Islamophobia is not seen as inexcusable.*

*While my opponents in this race have brought this hatred to the forefront, this is just a glimpse into what so many Muslims have had to endure every day across the five boroughs that we call home.”*

*-ZOHHRAN MAMDANI*

In November 2025, New Yorkers went to the polls and elected Mamdani as the next mayor of New York. In his victory speech, Mamdani stated that “no more will New York be a city where you can traffic in Islamophobia and win an election.” This was deeply significant as the Mayor-elect publicly acknowledged the anti-Muslim racism that was employed by his opponents against him, while also touching on how Islamophobia has been used as an electoral strategy for decades.



Yuki Iwamura/AP

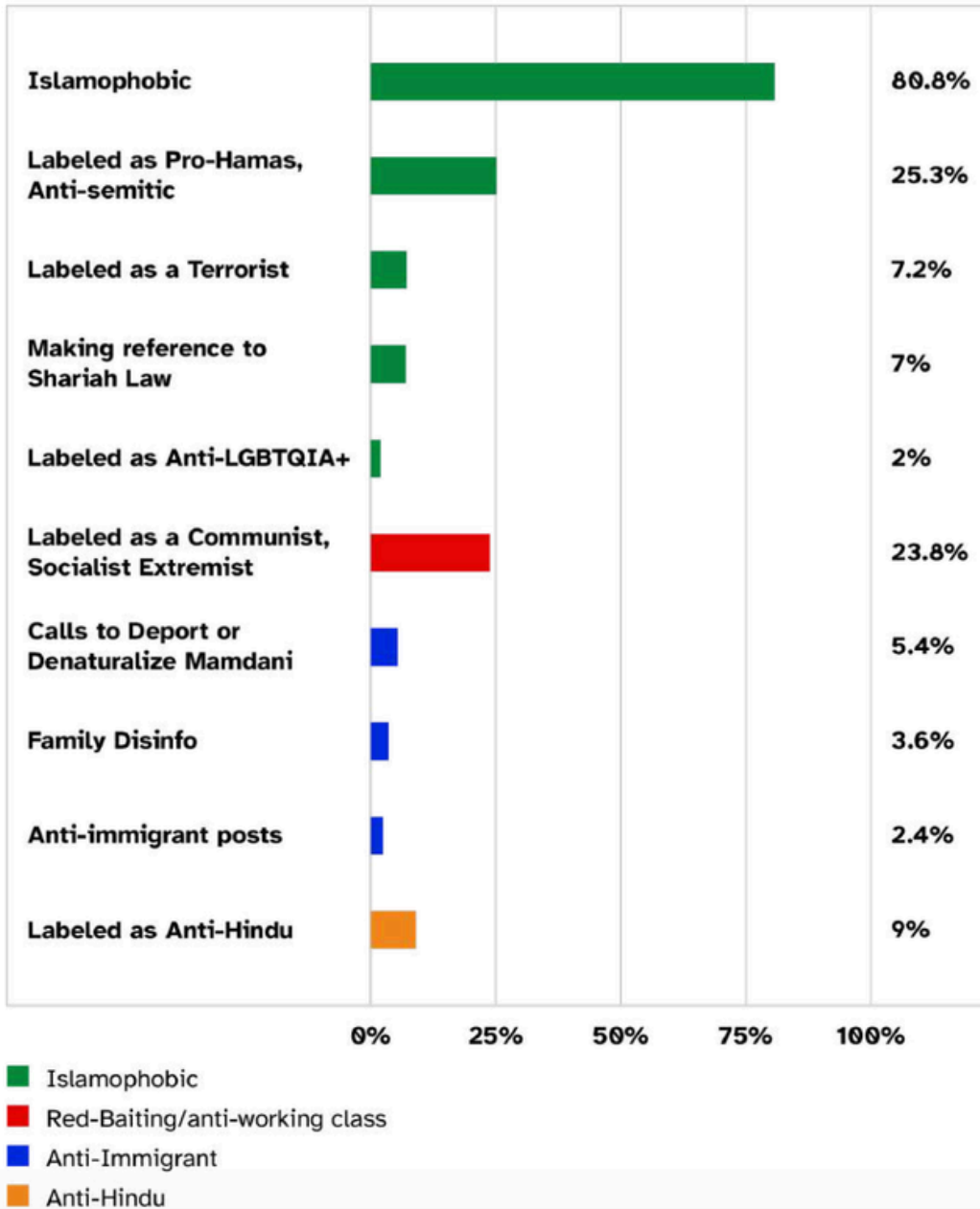
# ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

Zohran Mamdani’s growing popularity in the polls was accompanied by a surge in Islamophobia online. This rise in digital hate was not limited to anonymous online actors; politicians and public figures also contributed, engaging in bigoted and racist rhetoric, falsely linking Mamdani to 9/11, suggesting he “cheered” terrorism, and even calling for his denaturalization.

Even before Mamdani’s campaign and election, Islamophobia in the digital sphere had been a growing area of concern for human rights organizations and experts. Given the unregulated nature of social media, its role in influencing and shaping public discourse, and its fast and ever-growing nature, the space has been key in the dissemination of Islamophobic rhetoric (tropes, stereotypes, mis- and disinformation, conspiracy theories, etc.), all while also allowing anti-Muslim voices across the globe to connect and platform each other.

In October 2025, the digital rights group, Equality Labs, released a report outlining the extent of anti-Muslim posts targeting Mamdani and his campaign. It found that throughout 2025, over 17.1 million posts “circulated across multiple platforms about Mamdani, a significant share of which amplified vicious disinformation and hate speech against him.” Of the 500 social media posts analyzed by the group, “80% were Islamophobic, with 7% labelling Mamdani a terrorist, and 7% cautioned voters against Mamdani as a threat to imposing Sharia Law in America. An additional 2% of posts labelled him as anti-queer/trans/LGBTQIA+ because of his Muslim beliefs.” The graph from Equality Labs on the following page outlines these findings.

**Percent of Posts by Disinformation Category Targeting Mamdani Campaign**



*Equality Labs report*

Another element of digital hate is the reach of a post, which includes the potential scale of audience exposure (the posts appearing on individuals' feeds). When examining the reach of these Islamophobic posts targeting Mamdani, Equality Labs found that a combined total of 1.15 million Islamophobic posts had a total reach of over 152 billion.

### Number of Posts Containing Identity Slurs Linked to Mamdani Across 12 Platforms from January to October 30, 2025<sup>1</sup>

Post	Slurs	Total Reach
<b>1.43M</b>	"Communist"	<b>292 Billion</b>
<b>323k</b>	"Marxist"	<b>38.2 Billion</b>
<b>305k</b>	Mamdani being "deported"	<b>92.6 Billion</b>
<b>503k</b>	"Terrorist"	<b>86 Billion</b>
<b>269k</b>	"Islamist"	<b>20.7 Billion</b>
<b>167k</b>	"Jihadi"	<b>3.93 Billion</b>
<b>122k</b>	"Anti-Semite"	<b>26 Billion</b>
<b>77.7k</b>	"Pro-Hamas"	<b>10.6 Billion</b>
<b>10.1k</b>	"Jew-Hater"	<b>771 Million</b>
<b>7.02k</b>	"Anti-Gay"	<b>4.88 Billion</b>

- Islamophobic
- Red-Baiting/anti-working class
- Anti-Immigrant

*Equality Labs report*

Several reports from the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH) found similar trends. In a July 2025 report, CSOH analyzed “online hate before and after New York City’s mayoral primary, showing how discourse surrounding Zohran Mamdani and Muslim communities was shaped by overlapping narratives of Islamophobia, ideological fear-mongering, and xenophobic attacks.” Consistent with the findings from Equality Labs, CSOH found that Islamophobia was one of the primary themes in the harmful discourse, specifically framing “Mamdani’s Muslim faith and Islam in general as inherently incompatible with public office.”

CSOH published a follow-up to this report after the general election in November 2025, which resulted in Mamdani’s win. The organization found that from June 24th to October 31, “Islamophobia substantially increased,” with the month of October alone accounting for 43 percent of total posts, an increase of more than 450 percent compared with September. From June to October, it identified 35,522 original Islamophobic and xenophobic posts authored by 17,752 unique accounts on X, with original posts collectively receiving 7.37 million likes and 2.01 million reposts, generating an estimated reach of 1.5 billion. The terrorist allegations and smears dominated the posts, representing 72 percent of all posts, which framed Mamdani as a “terrorist or radical threat.” By casting Mamdani as a threat, the posts also positioned Muslim Americans as a target out-group, framed Islam as “inherently incompatible with American political and civic values through the use of dog whistles and conspiratorial narratives,” and questioned Mamdani’s status as a U.S. citizen with calls for his denaturalization.

It is important to note that these themes were not confined to the digital sphere. Islamophobia does not originate online; rather, it often reflects the long-standing anti-Muslim prejudice embedded in everyday society. Long before the rise of social media, decades of manufactured narratives portrayed Islam and Muslims as the “other,” repeatedly associating Muslims with terrorism and violence, and framing politically active Muslims as a dangerous, conspiratorial force intent on “Islamizing” the nation through Sharia. The media and political establishment played a central role in constructing and amplifying these harmful characterizations.

The rise of social media and decentralized information networks provided fertile ground for Islamophobic narratives to spread. Today’s social media platforms, including X and Instagram, serve as additional venues through which preexisting societal attitudes and beliefs are expressed and reinforced. This demonstrates that anti-Muslim narratives circulating in digital spaces are not organic to the online sphere; rather, they are the product of decades-long anti-Muslim animus rooted primarily within political and media institutions and reproduced in broader society.

# POLITICAL RHETORIC FROM OPPONENTS & PUBLIC FIGURES

From sitting members of Congress to the President of the United States, influential voices converged to attack Mamdani with explicitly Islamophobic rhetoric, exposing how deeply normalized anti-Muslim racism has become. These statements echoed the themes found in anti-Muslim posts online as they characterized Mamdani as 1) a terrorist, tied to/sympathetic to terrorism, and/or dangerous and connected to violence, 2) untrustworthy and not a “true American,” 3) nefarious individual who would implement Sharia, 4) antisemitic, and contended that 5) Mamdani’s Muslim faith was at odds with “American values”.





Evan Vucci/Reuters

## Donald Trump, President of the United States

The American President repeatedly smeared and name-called Mamdani, largely engaging in red-baiting by calling Mamdani a communist who would ruin New York City. When it came to Islamophobia, while not specifically overt, Trump did question Mamdani's citizenship status, and remarked about how "a lot of people are saying he's here illegally."

Trump compounded these false allegations by stating, "We're going to look at everything," a comment that conferred undue credibility on the claims. Such statements echo the Birther Conspiracy theory, previously wielded by President Trump against former President Barack Obama. The allegation rests on the claim that former President Obama and Mamdani, both non-white individuals who are either connected to Islam or are Muslim, cannot be true American citizens. Nativist and white nationalist voices have used these claims particularly against people of color, tying both Christianity and whiteness to defining American citizenship. This allegation advances both racist and Islamophobic logic, and as the following section will demonstrate, was repeated against Mamdani by several American elected officials.

**JD Vance** @JDVance

According to Zohran the real victim of 9/11 was his auntie who got some (allegedly) bad looks

**Greg Price** @greg\_price11 · Oct 24

Zohran through tears: "My aunt stopped taking the subway after 9/11 because she did not feel safe in her hijab."

Yes, she was the real victim of 9/11



1:43 PM · Oct 25, 2025 · 22.4M Views

16K 34K 228K 5.2K

## J.D. Vance, Vice President of the United States

Following Mamdani’s historic speech in October 2025 outside a Bronx mosque where he addressed the Islamophobic attacks against him, Vice President J.D. Vance mocked his comments, minimizing the real fear Muslims have faced in the United States especially following 9/11. Vance posted a clip of Mamdani’s speech with the commentary: “According to Zohran the real victim of 9/11 was his auntie who got some (allegedly) bad looks.”



Evan Vucci/Reuters



Andrew Cuomo is afraid he'll lose, so his donors want you to fear me.

His SuperPAC just sent out a mailer that artificially lengthened and darkened my beard.

This is blatant Islamophobia—the kind of racism that explains why MAGA billionaires support his campaign.



2:42 PM · Jun 12, 2025 · 8.6M Views

## Andrew Cuomo, former NY Governor

Andrew Cuomo was one of Mamdani's opponents in the mayoral race and his campaign repeatedly engaged in racism and Islamophobia. A couple of weeks before the primary election took place in June 2025, a pro-Cuomo SuperPAC called Fix the City, sent a campaign mailer targeting Jewish voters that accused Mamdani of “rejecting Jewish rights” and contained an altered image of the NY assemblyman showing him with a “darker, longer and bushier beard.” The mailer essentially accused Mamdani of being antisemitic for being critical of Israeli-state policy.

Mamdani posted the image of the ad and then the original photograph, noting that the mailer “artificially lengthened and darkened my beard.” He stated: “This is blatant Islamophobia—the kind of racism that explains why MAGA billionaires support his campaign.”

During the second mayoral debate in October 2025, Cuomo’s campaign published (and then quickly deleted) an AI-generated video depicting “criminals for Zohran Mamdani.” The video amplified racist and Islamophobic stereotypes, including featuring “a Black man in a keffiyeh shoplifting, an abuser, a trespasser, a trafficker, a drug dealer, and a drunk driver all declaring support for Mamdani.” Additionally, the video attempted to frame Mamdani as culturally inferior, by including clips of Mamdani eating rice with his hands (something that another politician criticized him for).

## Andrew Cuomo, former NY Governor

The following day, Cuomo appeared on Sid & Friends in the Morning, on 77 WABC radio, where he attempted to link Mamdani to 9/11, hinting that the candidate would cheer on an attack like that. During the conversation, Cuomo remarked, “God forbid, another 9/11 – can you imagine Mamdani in that seat?” When the conservative radio talk show host Sid Rosenberg responded, “He’d be cheering,” Cuomo laughed in agreement.



© Tania Savayan/The Journal News via Imagn Content Services, LLC

 **Elise Stefanik**   
@EliseStefanik

.@KathyHochul 's endorsed

No guns except for the terrorists

jihadist candidate for Mayor 🗳️



Last edited 10:48 PM · Oct 15, 2025 · 34.2K Views

 **Elise Stefanik**   
@EliseStefanik

Hi @emmagf from the @nytimes !

Regarding your question that popped into our inbox:  
"I'm a reporter for The Times and I'm writing about Stefanik's comments in response to Mamdani's FOX News interview. Mamdani's campaign said that her comments calling him a jihadist were Islamophobic. Please let me know if you want to respond."

Why yes Emma, I do want to respond. Please print IN FULL 🗳️

"I call Zohran Mamdani a jihadist because he is. Zohran Mamdani is a raging antisemite. Mamdani is the definition of a jihadist as he supports Hamas terrorists which he did as recently as yesterday when he refused to call for Hamas terrorists to put down their arms - the same Hamas terrorist group that slaughtered civilians including New Yorkers on October 7, 2023.

He is Kathy Hochul's endorsed jihadist Communist who she has empowered to destroy New York City.

It's why the New York State Democrat Party Chair refuses to support him. It's why multiple Democrat Members of Congress refuse to support him. It's why Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries have still not endorsed him. Because Zohran is a jihadist who will destroy New York."

Thank you!

Last edited 10:58 PM · Oct 16, 2025 · 1.1M Views

🗳️ ...

## Elise Stefanik, Congresswoman (NY)

Elise Stefanik, the Republican congresswoman representing New York's 21st congressional district and a vocal supporter of President Donald Trump, targeted Mamdani with some of the most explicit Islamophobic rhetoric. Ahead of the primary in June, Stefanik sent fundraising emails branding Mamdani a "Hamas terrorist sympathizer." In the lead up to the November election, Stefanik smeared him as a "jihadist candidate for mayor." Both characterizations are rooted in Islamophobic rationale, depicting Mamdani as a violent and dangerous individual due to his faith as a Muslim.

In response to a NYT reporter's query regarding Stefanik's prejudicial characterizations of Mamdani, the congresswoman posted her response on X, alleging that Mamdani is a "raging antisemite" and again smeared him as a "jihadist." Stefanik, who has connections to known anti-Muslim figures, has also repeatedly weaponized antisemitism to silence criticism of the state of Israel, in particular its violent campaign in Gaza, which leading human rights groups, experts, and a UN comission have all described as genocide.

## Marjorie Taylor Green, Congresswoman (GA)

The Georgia congresswoman who has previously promoted and endorsed an array of hate speech and conspiracy theories on her social media platforms posted an AI-generated image of the Statue of Liberty draped in a burqa accompanied with the words, “This hits hard,” following Mamdani's primary win in June 2025.



Marjorie Taylor Greene    
@mtgreenee



This hits hard.



1:32 PM · Jun 25, 2025 · 38.4M Views

## Randy Fine, Congressman (FL)

**Zohran Kwame Mamdani** @ZohranKMamdani · Oct 7  
My statement on the two year anniversary of October 7, 2023.

Two years ago today, Hamas carried out a horrific war crime, killing more than 1,100 Israelis and kidnapping 250 more. I mourn these lives and pray for the safe return of every hostage still held and for every family whose lives were torn apart by these atrocities.

In the aftermath of that day, Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli government launched a genocidal war: a death toll that now far exceeds 67,000; with the Israeli military bombing homes, hospitals, and schools into rubble. Every day in Gaza has become a place where grief itself has run out of language. I mourn these lives and pray for the families that have been shattered. Our government has been complicit through it all.

This must end. The occupation and apartheid must end. Peace must be pursued through diplomacy, not war crimes, and our government must act to end these atrocities and hold those responsible to account.

These last two years have demonstrated the very worst of humanity. We must answer it by modeling the very best: a relentless pursuit of our higher ideals and an unwavering commitment to universal human rights.

Randy Fine is a Republican congressman representing the state of Florida. He is no stranger to Islamophobia as he has a documented history of making anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian, and racist comments. This includes threatening two Muslim women members of Congress, calling for Muslims to be “destroyed,” calling for the deportation of all Muslim American immigrants and citizenship revocations “where possible.” Muslim American organizations have accused Fine of “inciting hate and violence against members of the Palestinian community in several Facebook posts referring to the Palestinians as ‘animals.’” Fine has claimed that Islamophobia is a “lie” and used his social media platforms to repeatedly claim there is a “Muslim problem” in the United States and worldwide. Fine employed anti-Muslim rhetoric in his targeting of Mamdani, describing him as “little more than a Muslim terrorist.”

## Randy Fine, Congressman (FL)



Congressman Randy Fine @RepFine



Legal immigrants who hate America elected a Communist Muslim Jihadist.

New York City has fallen. America is next if we don't stop it.

**Decision Desk HQ** @DecisionDeskHQ · Nov 5, 2025  
Decision Desk HQ projects Zohran Mamdani to win the New York City Mayor election.

#DecisionMade: 9:03 pm ET

...



The Florida congressman also alleged that Mamdani committed fraud to become a naturalized citizen of the United States, calling on the Department of Justice to investigate his application. Fine also argued for Mamdani to be stripped of his American citizenship and deported, stating, "The only thing I want to see him running for is his gate at JFK for his deportation flight back to Uganda".

Following Mamdani's election win in November, Fine engaged in fearmongering, posting on X: "Legal immigrants who hate America elected a Communist Muslim Jihadist," and a few days later posted "New York City has fallen to Muslim terror. America is next if we don't wake up." Fine's rhetoric characterized Mamdani as a security threat to the United States, framing him as a foreign other who engaged in illegal activities to obtain citizenship. He further claimed that Mamdani's win would mean Sharia would be implemented in NYC, going so far as to introduce the No Shari'a Act in September 2025, reviving long-standing anti-Muslim conspiracy theories promoted for decades by Islamophobic groups.

## Andy Ogles, Congressman (TN)

Representative Andy Ogles, another Republican member of Congress, also called for the stripping of Mamdani's US citizenship and deportation. In a June 2025 post on X, Ogles described Mamdani as "little Muhammad" and an "antisemite" who "will destroy the great City of New York." In the post, he published his letter to the Attorney General calling for her to open up denaturalization proceedings against Mamdani. Ogles repeated his false claims regarding Mamdani's citizenship application in conversation with far-right conspiracy theorist and anti-Muslim commentator, Laura Loomer.



Rep. Andy Ogles  
@RepOgles

Zohran "little muhammad" Mamdani is an antisemitic, socialist, communist who will destroy the great City of New York. He needs to be DEPORTED. Which is why I am calling for him to be subject to denaturalization proceedings.

Attached is my letter to @AGPamBondi.



7:20 PM · Jun 26, 2025 · 16.3M Views

12K

12K

40K

3.4K



Rep. Andy Ogles  
@RepOgles

This man came to America for one reason: to turn America into an Islamic theocracy.

I say NO to Sharia law—which is why I've presented an argument to have Mamdani sent back to Uganda based on information he clearly withheld

I'm fighting to take our country back. DOJ must investigate.



11:13 PM · Oct 27, 2025 · 20.1M Views

## Andy Ogles, Congressman (TN)



Rep. Andy Ogles    
@RepOgles



WAKE UP NEW YORK!



2:26 AM · Nov 4, 2025 · **63M** Views

On election day in November 2025, Ogles shared video imagery of the 9/11 attacks, with the text “WAKE UP NEW YORK!” The post on X appeared to tie the New York Mayoral election and Mamdani’s lead and potential win to one of the most deadly attacks on U.S. soil. Like many of Ogles’s other social media posts and statements, the sole focus was on fearmongering pointing to Mamdani’s Muslim faith as a security and safety threat to New Yorkers and wider American society.

## Andy Ogles, Congressman (TN)

Following Mamdani’s election win, Ogles published an [AI-generated video](#) on his X account, which showed NYC destroyed and overtaken by criminals as a result of Mamdani’s election. The video was dubbed with an AI-generated song, with lyrics including “just imagine North Korea with a dash of Sharia” while images showed a silhouette of a burqa and young men wearing clothing attributed to the Taliban. It also showed an image of a grocery store titled “Mamdani grocery Halal” with the words “Kosher” crossed out. While the man sings “New York you're done” the image is of Muslim men praying in the streets of the city, alluding to conspiracy theories of an “Islamic takeover.” Another portion of the video had bellydancers performing on stage with the word “Global Intifada Dancers” in the background.



Remember New York, I warned you 🙄  
[#DeportMamdani](#)  
[#SaveNewYork](#)



Readers added context to this video

All images in this video have been generated with AI and are not real.

[captechu.edu/blog/how-spot-...](#)

Do you find this helpful?

Rate it

This note is visible to a small test group. Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. [Find out more.](#)

1:29 PM · Nov 7, 2025 · 5.3M Views

## Brandon Gill, Congressman (TX)

After a right-wing X profile published a video of Mamdani answering questions about his campaign while eating Biryani with his hands, Republican Rep. Brandon Gill mocked him, writing, "Civilized people in America don't eat like this. If you refuse to adapt to Western customs, go back to the Third World." In many cultures around the world, eating with one's hands is customary; characterizing this practice as "uncivilized" is a racist judgment grounded in Western ideas of superiority.



**Congressman Brandon Gill** @RepBrandonGill

Civilized people in America don't eat like this.

If you refuse to adopt Western customs, go back to the Third World.



2:01 AM · Jun 30, 2025 · 29.3M Views

## Charlie Kirk, political commentator

Founder of Turning Point USA, Charlie Kirk, referenced the 9/11 attacks in his post following Mamdani's primary win, clinging to the Islamophobic claim that Muslims were responsible for the deadly attack that occurred in 2001.



**Charlie Kirk** @charliekirk11



24 years ago a group of Muslims killed 2,753 people on 9/11

Now a Muslim Socialist is on pace to run New York City

3:25 AM · Jun 25, 2025 · 48.5M Views

## Laura Loomer, conspiracy theorist and commentator

Far right conspiracy theorist and anti-Muslim social media personality, Laura Loomer, also invoked 9/11 in an attempt to stoke fear and spread Islamophobic sentiment following Mamdani's primary win in June 2025. Loomer, who is banned by several riding-sharing apps for her anti-Muslim hostility, has called Islam a "cancer" and described Muslims as "savages". She alleged that Mamdani is "supported by terrorists," and warned that with his win, New Yorkers would be destroyed and see "9/11 2.0." This wasn't her only post amplifying anti-Muslim bigotry as she went into numerous rants on X targeting Mamdani, claiming there would be an "Islamic takeover" of NYC, and demonizing Islam and Muslims.



Laura Loomer ✓  
@LauraLoomer

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.@ZohranKMamdani hasn't even been a US citizen for 10 years.

He is literally supported by terrorists.

NYC is about to see 9/11 2.0

3:45 AM · Jun 25, 2025 · 799.1K Views

In a lengthy October 2025 post, Loomer described Mamdani as a "jihadist," equated Hamas to Palestine, and claimed Mamdani was "HAMAS's candidate." She described Mamdani's candidacy as a "real terror threat" and invoked anti-Palestinian racism when she claimed that Mamdani aims to "advance Palestinian Islamic terrorism." She ended the rant by calling on the GOP to "address the Islamification of America," and stated that "Muslim candidates aren't bad for America simply because they are socialists. They are bad for America because they are JIHADISTS." See the image of Loomer's tweet on the following page.



**Laura Loomer** ✓  
@LauraLoomer

Subscribe



He's actually just a jihadist @IngrahamAngle.

Since the beginning of his campaign, @ZohranKMamdani has made it very clear that he is HAMAS's candidate. He literally said his entire political career was created because of "Palestine".

See video below 📺

In his own words, Mamdani said his campaign is for the sake of advancing Islam.

Personally, as it pertains to messaging, I believe we would be much better off if the leading conservative pundits and our elected officials stopped calling Mamdani a SOCIALIST and started calling him what he actually is:

**A JIHADIST!**

They are all minimizing the real terror threat associated with Mamdani's candidacy when they water down his jihadist views as "socialism".

Mamdani is running for Mayor to advance Palestinian Islamic terrorism in the largest city in America, which happens to also be the financial capital of our country.

He's not hiding it.

Republicans have just been too cowardly to call out Islam.

This is Mamdani in November of 2024.

It's time for the GOP to address the Islamification of America. These Muslim candidates aren't bad for America simply because they are socialists.

They are bad for America because they are JIHADISTS.



# THE “MUSLIM ANTISEMITE” TROPE

The trope of the “Muslim antisemite” appeared time and again in many of the bigoted attacks against Mamdani. The Democratic-Socialist politician is a vocal supporter of Palestinian human rights and self-determination, and has denounced Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. For many right-wing, pro-Israel, and Zionist voices, support for the human rights of Palestinians has been framed as evidence of antisemitism. This argument also equates opposition and criticism of the state of Israel and Zionism, a political ideology, with antisemitism. This framing is deeply troubling, as it instrumentalizes a real and historically documented hatred of Jewish people, weaponizing it to silence criticism of Israeli state policy, particularly Israel’s apartheid system, its systematic violations of Palestinian rights, and its genocide in Gaza.

This trope is not new but has had a resurgence, especially in the face of growing international condemnation of Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Because Israel and its supporters frame the violent campaign as a fight against antisemitism and “terrorism,” they characterize any support for Palestinian human rights and criticism of the genocide as support for antisemitism and terrorism. This framing is used to shut down debate, silence critics, and inflame anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia.

There have been concerted efforts for decades by pro-Israel voices to frame Muslims as inherently antisemitic. An example of this is the claim that rising antisemitism in Europe is the result of increased migration of Muslims to the continent. Politicians from across the political spectrum have described this issue as one connected to migration, and have used it to push for hostile and discriminatory immigration and refugee policies. These voices frame antisemitism as an “imported issue” shifting the blame to Arabs and Muslims, and thereby try to “absolve themselves and their predecessors of wrongdoing by shifting the blame and attributing the origins of anti-Semitism to Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in general.” Furthermore, such claims minimize and/or ignore the documented fact that the far-right is a major political force behind rising antisemitism in Europe.



*Bryan Bedder/Getty Images for Anti-Defamation League*

In the United States, following Mamdani’s election, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which has been criticized by academics and rights organizations for engaging in racism and Islamophobia, announced it would be initiating a “Mamdani monitor,” to track the new Mayor’s policies. ADL’s CEO Jonathan Greenblatt pointed to Mamdani’s criticism of Israel as evidence of antisemitic views, and defended the establishment of the project as necessary to protect the rights and safety of Jewish New Yorkers. Notably, approximately one-third of Jewish New Yorkers voted for Mamdani.

The ADL’s decision to establish a special project that effectively surveils and targets an elected official exemplifies the double standards often applied to politically active Muslims, particularly those who openly support Palestinian human rights. By implying that Mamdani must be closely watched until his “true” antisemitic nature is revealed, the initiative reinforces a narrative rooted in Islamophobic assumptions. Following ADL’s announcement of the special project, more than a dozen Jewish organizations signed a statement accusing the organization of “racist and Islamophobic attacks on our mayor-elect [that] undermine our shared commitment to confronting both antisemitism and Islamophobia in New York City”.

Mamdani’s primary win and subsequent rise in U.S. politics inspired many both within and beyond the United States. As documented above, it also provoked a virulent wave of hatred amplified by influential voices. Criticism rarely focused on Mamdani’s

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## “MUSLIM ANTISEMITE” TROPE

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policies; instead, his identity as a Muslim became the central target of candidates, opposition figures, and media commentators. However, it is important to contextualize these attacks with the broader existence of Islamophobia in politics. Mamdani is not the first Muslim American candidate to face Islamophobia (and unfortunately will not be the last), as previous campaigns against Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib demonstrate. Mamdani himself acknowledged this pattern in an interview on MSNBC, stating that Islamophobia is “endemic to politics across this country.”

# CONCLUSION

Mamdani's candidacy and election win became a focal point for anti-Muslim racism in the United States and beyond. Islamophobia surged across social and political commentary, particularly among opponents who relied on the long-standing tactic of demonizing Muslims to mobilize voters. The commentary was not merely of political critique, as very few challenged Mamdani's policies; instead, it was his Muslim faith that became the punching bag- a hallmark of racist and prejudicial attacks.

Many claimed that Mamdani was a foreigner, signalling to the public that those who are Muslim and/or South Asian are not true Americans. Additionally, the most often used smear was to tie Mamdani to terrorism and violence, simply because of his Muslim identity. Overall, both sets of prejudicial attacks aimed to characterize Mamdani as a threat to the safety and well-being of Americans.

Yet Mamdani's win also marked a shift in political possibility: Islamophobia was openly challenged, and many voters refused to succumb to fear-based rhetoric, instead casting their ballots based on the progressive policies Mamdani championed.

This does not suggest that Islamophobia as a political strategy is disappearing or even significantly diminishing. A cursory glance at global politics reveals that anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies remain central tools across both right- and left-wing movements. This is manifested in measures such as hijab bans, restrictive and hostile immigration policies, the criminalization or dismantling of Muslim organizations, and explicit, dangerous calls for denaturalization and deportation of Muslim citizens in western countries.

However, Mamdani's victory has fractured the perceived durability of this tactic, exposing its limits and signaling the potential for a political landscape less beholden to manufactured fear. Mamdani's campaign was historic in multiple ways, as was the level of Islamophobic vitriol targeting him.



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