

Trump election boosts anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic attacks

Our reporter
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Moslem mosques in California and Jewish neighborhoods in New York City were both targeted for hate crimes this week, by perpetrators taking the election of Donald Trump as license to threaten religious and racial minorities.

The Council on Islamic-American Relations (CAIR) said that letters declaring that Trump will do to Muslims what Hitler “did to the Jews” were sent to Islamic centers in the northern California city of San Jose, as well as Long Beach and Pomona in southern California.

The semi-literate, hand-written letters described Trump as the “new sherriff [sic] in town” who would “cleanse America and make it shine again” by eliminating Muslims from the population. The letters were signed “Americans for a Better Way” and ended with the salutation “long live President Trump and God bless the USA.”

Hussam Ayloush, executive director of CAIR’s Los Angeles office, said in a statement, “The hate campaign targeting California houses of worship must be investigated as an act of religious intimidation, and our state’s leaders should speak out against the growing anti-Muslim bigotry that leads to such incidents.”

Last week, the FBI reported that hate crimes against American Muslims rose last year to the highest level since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon. There were 257 anti-Muslim incidents in 2015—which saw the launching of Trump’s presidential campaign in June—an increase of nearly 67 percent from 2014.

While the figures for 2016 are incomplete, more than 100 anti-Muslim incidents have been recorded just in the 21 days since the election, according to CAIR’s national office. The organization has placed the blame on Trump for his hateful campaign rhetoric, particularly

his call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States as immigrants, refugees or even visitors.

The group also noted that the FBI had conducted numerous interviews with Muslims in at least eight states on the pretext of collecting information about potential threats from al-Qaeda against the US elections.

In New York City, there were reports of a “surge of swastika vandalism” since the November 8 election. At least 14 cases were reported, eight in the past week—triple the usual rate—according to the New York Police Department. Of those, no arrests were made.

Several of the swastikas included slogans like “Go Trump,” “Trump 2016,” or other pro-Trump graffiti, indicating the political sympathies of the anti-Semites responsible. One sign combined a swastika with “Make America White Again.”

The same FBI report that showed the spike in anti-Muslim attacks reported a 9 percent rise in anti-Jewish attacks during 2015. By far the largest number of hate crimes were committed against African-Americans, with racism and ethnic bias believed to be involved in 59 percent of all attacks, compared to 20 percent attributed to religious prejudice and 18 percent to intolerance over sexual orientation.

A separate tally by the Southern Poverty Law Center found 701 cases of racial harassment of all kinds since election day, including 60 acts of vandalism involving the swastika.

Trump appointed as his top White House strategist a proven propagandist for racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim bigotry, Stephen K. Bannon, former CEO of Breitbart News. Bannon himself described Breitbart as the flagship of the alt-right, the cosmetic terminology for white supremacism.



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