

# Bomber targets mosque in Bloomington, Minnesota

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On Saturday morning around 5 a.m., a bomb flew through a window of the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington, Minnesota and exploded as worshippers gathered for a prayer session. Though the explosion caused a fire in the building, there were no injuries.

Citing an anonymous US official, CBS News reported on Monday that the explosive used in the attack was a pipe-bomb type device of “more sophistication” than investigators had expected. The bomb, which FBI investigators have also described as an “improvised explosive device,” was thrown through a window into the imam’s office as prayers began.

Mohammed Omar, the executive director of the mosque, told reporters that a member of the congregation saw a pickup truck speeding away after the blast. He said that the perpetrator may have known which window to throw the bomb into, as it exploded in his office.

The attack invoked an immediate response from neighbors in the local Bloomington community and throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. Worshippers returned to the mosque on Monday and flowers were laid at the site.

The mosque’s congregation is made up of people from the area’s Somali community. Minnesota is home to the largest community of Somali-immigrants in the United States, many of whom have fled decades of wars and violence stoked by American imperialism.

Minnesota’s Democratic governor Mark Dayton visited the mosque with a delegation of public officials alongside him, including Democratic Representative Keith Ellison, and declared that the bombing was an act of terrorism.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has announced a \$10,000 reward for any information

leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for Saturday’s attack in Bloomington.

The FBI also announced that they are offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the identification of the suspect or suspects in the attack. The head of the Minneapolis FBI told a press conference that the investigation of the bombing is a top priority, but officials did not answer questions.

The Department of Homeland Security released a perfunctory two-sentence statement on Saturday evening noting the bombing and condemning attacks on religious institutions. President Donald Trump, who has frequently taken to Twitter to highlight terrorist attacks in Europe and is known as a prolific tweeter, has not recognized the attack on his social media account.

The bombing of the mosque in Bloomington comes amid a trend of rising anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic attacks in the United States since the election of Donald Trump. Trump made repeated appeals to far-right forces during his presidency and during his campaign.

These forces have been further emboldened by Trump’s actions since January, including his implementation of the anti-Muslim travel ban, which limits travel from six predominantly Muslim countries, as well as the fascistic forces he has surrounded himself with in the White House.

A recent report by CAIR revealed that 2017 is on track to be one of the worst ever years for anti-Muslim bias incidents and hate crimes in the United States.

Between 2014 and 2016 CAIR recorded a 65 percent increase in anti-Muslim bias incidents where there was an identifiable element of religious discrimination and a 584 percent surge in hate crimes targeting individuals or property.

CAIR’s report shows that, compared to the first half

of 2016, the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes has risen by 91 percent, almost double what was previously the worst year since the organization began recording such incidents in 2013.

While Muslim-Americans reported in 2016 that harassment was the most frequent type of abuse they encountered (18 percent), this was followed closely by intrusive questioning or targeting by the FBI (15 percent). A significant number of Muslim-Americans also reported being racially and religiously profiled by agents from Customs and Border Patrol and the Transportation Safety Administration while traveling in and out of the country.

CAIR has called for investigations into possible anti-Muslim bias motives in dozens of incidents targeting mosques this year in multiple states in every region of the country including Colorado, Florida, Ohio, Iowa, Kentucky, Georgia, Arizona, Tennessee, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Maryland and Texas.

Earlier this month, CAIR called on the FBI and local law enforcement to investigate vandalism of Muslim Cemetery Al Maghfirah in Castle Rock, a township south of St. Paul in Minnesota. In addition to damaging property, the vandals spray-painted swastikas and wrote, "Leave, you R dead."



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