

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO ADOPTING A WORKING DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL TO IDENTIFY, CONDEMN AND COMBAT ANTI-MUSLIM HATE, AND AFFIRM THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND CIVIL RIGHTS.

WHEREAS,

The City Council of the City of San Diego finds and declares the following:

WHEREAS, the City of San Diego is home to one of California's largest and most diverse Muslim communities, representing a wide range of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and national backgrounds and making significant contributions to the civic, educational, cultural, economic, and charitable life of the city; and

WHEREAS, the City of San Diego has long affirmed its commitment to protecting the civil rights, constitutional liberties, and equal dignity of every resident regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic; and

WHEREAS, freedom of religion, including the right to worship without fear of intimidation or violence, is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 4 of the California Constitution; and

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2026, the Islamic Center of San Diego was the target of a deadly hate-motivated attack that claimed the lives of three community members and profoundly impacted Muslim families throughout the San Diego region, during which approximately 140 students attending the Islamic Center's school—together with their teachers and staff—were present on campus and placed in imminent danger, and the heroic actions and sacrifice of the three victims prevented the attacker from reaching the school and likely saved the lives of countless children, educators, and staff members; and

WHEREAS, following that attack, the U.S. Immigration Policy Center at the University of California San Diego found that 88 percent of surveyed Muslims in San Diego County reported feeling less safe in their community, 74 percent reported increased concern for their personal safety because they are Muslim, nearly two-thirds reported experiencing discrimination in the

previous year because of their Muslim identity, and nearly one-half expressed concern that threats against Muslims are not taken seriously; and

WHEREAS these findings demonstrate that anti-Muslim hatred affects not only physical safety but also civic participation, religious freedom, and the ability of Muslim residents to fully participate in public life; and

WHEREAS, research found that one in two Muslim students in California reported being bullied because of their religion, 43 percent reported missing school because of bullying, 67 percent reported not reporting incidents because they lacked confidence in school responses, and approximately one-half reported not feeling safe or welcome at school; and

WHEREAS Muslims throughout the United States continue to experience discrimination in employment, education, housing, healthcare, public accommodations, travel, and interactions with government institutions; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding demonstrates that Islamophobia remains pervasive and systemic in the United States, with approximately six in ten American Muslims reporting experiencing religious discrimination within the previous year, including discrimination in employment, education, healthcare, housing, travel, interactions with law enforcement, and civic participation, and further finds that Islamophobia undermines equal opportunity, weakens democratic participation, and harms not only Muslims but all communities by fostering intolerance and discrimination; and

WHEREAS Islamophobia harms not only Muslims but the broader community by undermining religious liberty, equal opportunity, public safety, and the democratic values upon which the City of San Diego is founded; and

WHEREAS the City Council recognizes that providing a common working definition of Islamophobia will assist City officials, employees, advisory bodies, educators, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations in identifying anti-Muslim bias, improving public education, and promoting equal treatment under the law

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

- Recognizes the documented rise in anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination, and violence locally, nationally, and globally, and unequivocally rejects Islamophobia and all forms of anti-Muslim bias, discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- Commits to working collaboratively with Muslim communities, interfaith partners, educational institutions, community organizations, and relevant stakeholders to identify, prevent, and address anti-Muslim bias and discrimination.

- Adopts the following definition of Islamophobia for the purpose of guiding the City's understanding and response to anti-Muslim bias:

Working Definition

Islamophobia is a form of racism, prejudice, discrimination, hostility, or hatred directed toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim that targets expressions of Muslim identity or perceived Muslim identity and may manifest through speech, conduct, institutional practices, exclusion, intimidation, harassment, or violence.

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia may include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, encouraging, or justifying violence against Muslims because they are Muslim.
- Targeting mosques, Islamic schools, Muslim cemeteries, or Islamic organizations for vandalism, threats, intimidation, or violence because of their religious identity.
- Harassing or assaulting individuals because they wear hijab, niqab, kufi, thobe, or other visible expressions of Islamic faith.
- Making false, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as a group, including portraying Muslims as inherently violent, extremist, disloyal, uncivilized, or incompatible with democratic society.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of an individual, terrorist organization, or foreign government.
- Denying employment, housing, education, healthcare, public accommodations, or government services because an individual is Muslim or perceived to be Muslim.
- Bullying, intimidating, or excluding students because they are Muslim or are perceived to be Muslim.
- Treating Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim as presumptive security threats solely because of their religion, ancestry, ethnicity, name, language, or appearance.
- Promoting conspiracy theories alleging that Muslims seek to undermine democratic institutions, secretly control government, or impose religious rule.
- Targeting individuals, businesses, organizations, or institutions for discrimination or violence because they are, or are perceived to be, Muslim.
- Threatening, intimidating, vandalizing, or attacking houses of worship, such as Islamic Center of San Diego and other mosques.
- Government actions, policies, or practices that discriminate against Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim, or that disproportionately burden Muslim individuals, communities, institutions, or religious practices without a legitimate and nondiscriminatory justification, also may constitute manifestations of Islamophobia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the City commits to continued investment in the physical security of houses of worship and to expanding education, interfaith engagement, and collaboration among community organizations, educational institutions, religious congregations, and public agencies to promote religious understanding, protect civil rights, strengthen community resilience, and prevent Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hate, and hate directed toward individuals perceived to be Muslim.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the city reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that every resident can live, work, learn, worship, and participate in civic life free from discrimination, intimidation, and violence.