



ISIS ATTACKS FUEL ISLAMOPHOBIA IN POLITICS

EDITORIAL

Syrian refugee Samah Qteish, mother of two and pregnant, stands at the perimeter of Zaatari refugee camp on Dec. 15, 2015 in Jordan. Anyone who wants to go out of the camp must get approval. Qteish waits for her husband. With over 85,000 Syrian residents, Zaatari refugee camp is one of the largest refugee camps in the world.

Carolyn Cole/Los Angeles Times/TNS

An average Google search of “Islam is” produces commonly searched suggestions of “Islam is violent” or “Islam is a cult.” Although it’s a seemingly random series of google searches, the correlation of Islam with violence reflects the growing trend of Islamophobia within this country.

Within the past months, incidents such as the Paris attacks, San Bernardino, and others, have only strengthened the Islamophobic sentiments within the United States. A Bloomberg Politics poll conducted after the Paris attacks, showed that 53 percent of Americans do not want to accept Syrian refugees and 11 percent said they would only accept Christian refugees. America, the land of the free and one of the most progressive nations in the world, making major strides with topics such as gay marriage, is lacking when it comes to doing the obvious: helping these refugees.

If anything, political rhetoric on the subject is worsening. Presidential hopeful Donald Trump advocates for a ban on the immigration of Muslim refugees, calling it a modern day and necessary version of Japanese internment during World War II. This baffling idea of banning people solely based on their religion reverts all the progress America has made in order to combat the closed minded, xenophobic views this country has struggled with for so many years.

“Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses,” Trump said. “Our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life.”

From promises to increase surveillance on Muslims to closing down mosques, Trump’s statements and supporters only solidify the larger problem this nation is facing: Islamophobia.

Other presidential candidates have made comments that are just as disparaging. Ben Carson has likened Syrian refugees to rabid dogs, claiming that “if there is a rabid dog running around your neighbourhood, you’re probably not going to assume something good about that dog.” On different occasions, he has stated he would not support a Muslim for President because that faith would be inconsistent with the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Marco Rubio has referred to the Paris attacks as a “clash of civilizations”, saying that we are essentially at war with radical Islam, instead of terrorism threats. “That would be like saying we weren’t at war with the Nazis, because we were afraid to offend some Germans who may have been members of the Nazi Party but weren’t violent themselves,” Rubio said.

Thirty one individual states are now banning the influx of refugees, including South Carolina.

“Until I can be assured that all potential refugees from Syria have no ties to terrorist organizations, I am re-

questing that the State Department not resettle any Syrian refugees in South Carolina,” Governor Nikki Haley stated. While the authority of admitting refugees lies with the federal government, states that refuse to cooperate will make the process of relocating them much more difficult.

The growing epidemic of Islamophobia is spreading in more ways than expected. American mosques and Islamic centers have been the victims of vandalism, harassment and anti-Muslim bigotry at least 63 times in 2015. According to studies conducted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, this is the largest number of hate crimes recorded since the group began these annual studies in 2009.

Canada’s Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has planned to resettle 10,000 refugees over the next three years, and France, even after the chaos of the Paris attacks, is sticking by its promise to take in 30,000 refugees over the next two years. While the Obama administration has announced that 10,000 Syrian refugees will be allowed entry into the United States, Islamophobia could cause the United States to neglect and willfully ignore it’s role in this humanitarian crisis.

Amidst all this chaos, one thing is clear for 2016. Islamophobia is a rising concern for Americans, and we no longer allow xenophobia or ignorance to interfere with our judgments.

The Cavalier

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