

Rising Islamophobia and Anti-Arab hate. Let's Talk about Racism.

Challenging Stereotypes, Building Bridges: Addressing the Surge in
Islamophobia and Anti-Arab Hate

Human Relations Commission Mission

“... promote the just and fair treatment of
all people in Palo Alto”

Bigotry against Palestinians and Islamophobia

- Recent Acts of Hate

Murder of a 6 year old boy, Wadea Al-Fayoume



Three Palestinian college students shot in Vermont



How Does this Affect us here in Palo Alto?

- Fear of Speaking Up
- Fear of advocating for Palestinian Human Rights
- Fear of being called “Terrorist”
 - Our identities are unjustly conflated with terrorism
 - PAUSD Resolution : *“WHEREAS, Muslim and MENA, and especially our Palestinian PAUSD students and families, whose cultural self-expression and very identity are routinely conflated with terrorism, are feeling targeted, and report experiencing hatred, silencing, intimidation and exclusionary behaviors in our elementary, middle and high schools;”*
 - [Regular Board Meeting - November 14, 2023](#)
- Afraid to identify with our culture, religion or heritage
- Fear of being doxxed, threatened, or harassed

The effects go beyond the Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian communities. It affects ALL of us, regardless of ethnic background, race, or religion. When people fear being silenced, called names, and fear for their own personal safeties, it isolates communities and dehumanizes them.

Silence from Community leader further worsens this

Mental Health Effects

Rania Awaad, M.D. is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Stanford University School of Medicine where she is the Director of the Stanford Muslim Mental Health & Islamic Psychology Lab

- Over 60% of American Muslims have reported experiencing at least one instance of religious discrimination
- Living through Islamophobia is associated with poorer mental health outcomes in both Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim.
- Discrimination due to Muslim identity is associated with a greater number of depressive symptoms, fear and anxiety, lower self-esteem, and overall psychological distress.
- 56% of Muslim school-age respondents reported feeling unsafe at school and 20% of them reported missing school due to these feelings

TIME

SIGN UP FOR OUR IDEAS NEWSLETTER

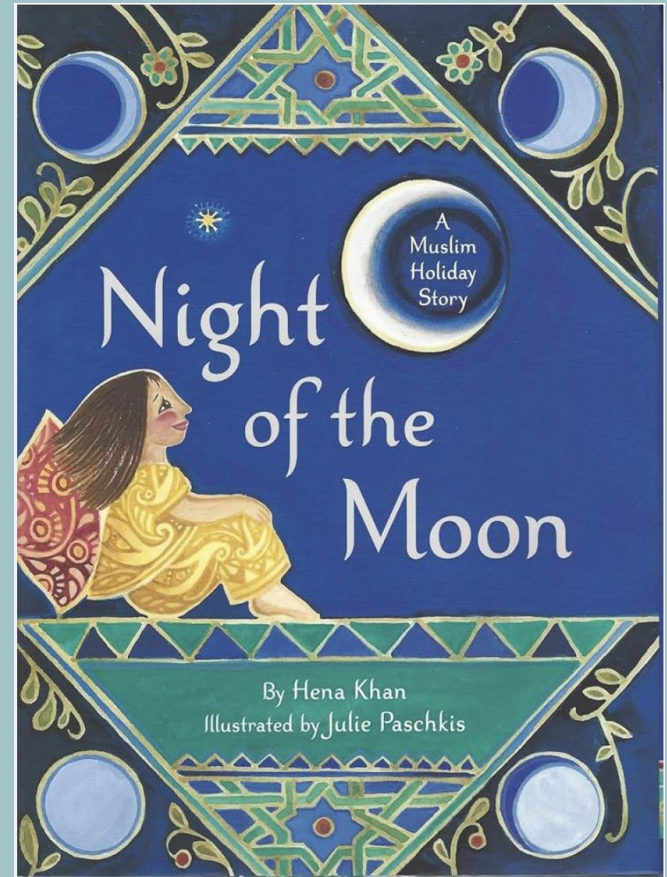
IDEAS • PSYCHOLOGY

The Devastating Mental Health Effects of Islamophobia



Personal Story of being a Palo Alto Muslim

- Previously, always felt included and comfortable.
- Would read Ramadan story before winter break at Walter Hays
- Truly felt Palo Alto was a utopia
- Different now - This is the most fearful time since living in Palo Alto



How can the HRC Help Us?

- Official Recognition of Ramadan and Eid Holidays
- Cultural and Literary Festivals
 - Highlight Muslim and Arab authors
 - Highlight prominent American Muslim figures past and present (eg Muhammad Ali, Hasan Minhaj)
 - Highlight Muslim artists and musicians
 - Annual Palo Alto city sponsored community Iftar (Ramadan) dinner
 - Eid festivals
- Education
 - On Islam, Ramadan, and Fasting
 - Teach-ins for local teachers on Islamic and Arab History
- Safety
 - Liaison with Police department



How can the HRC Help Us?

- City Council Support
 - Stronger condemnation of Islamophobia, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian racism
 - [Palestinian Cultural Day Proclamation May 15, 2023](#)
- Adoption of anti-racism and anti-hate definitions along with community education
 - Anti-Palestinian racism
 - [Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations](#) by Arab Canadian Lawyers Association
 - [Anti-Palestinian Racism](#)
 - Islamophobia
 - [A Working Definition of Islamophobia - Presented at Human Rights Council](#)



Proclamation

PALESTINIAN CULTURAL DAY

May 15, 2023



Thank you



We appreciate that you have given
our community a voice.

