



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ARAB AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS
Statement Regarding the Attack on the Islamic Center of San Diego

The Arab American Bar Association of Illinois (“AABAR”) is heartbroken and outraged by the horrific attack at the Islamic Center of San Diego that claimed the lives of three members of the Muslim community and terrorized worshippers gathered at one of the nation’s largest mosques. We mourn the lives lost, stand with the victims’ families and loved ones, and extend our support to the broader Muslim and Arab American communities during this painful time.

According to law enforcement officials, the attack is being investigated as a hate crime, and authorities have reported evidence of extremist and anti-Muslim rhetoric connected to the perpetrators.

No person should fear for their safety while gathering to worship, learn, or seek community. Hate-fueled violence directed at Muslim and Arab American communities is not an isolated phenomenon. It reflects a broader and deeply troubling pattern of Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, and dehumanization that continues to place vulnerable communities at risk.

As an organization of attorneys, judges, and legal professionals committed to justice and equal protection under the law, AABAR condemns not only this act of violence, but also the rhetoric and conduct that contribute to a climate where such hatred can flourish. Public officials, political leaders, media figures, and others with influential platforms must recognize the impact their words can have on public perception and public safety. Reckless or inflammatory rhetoric concerning Arab Americans and Muslims can reinforce dangerous stereotypes, deepen division, and contribute to an environment in which acts of hatred and violence become more likely.

This concern is not new. Communities across the country — including here in Illinois — have experienced the devastating consequences of escalating Islamophobia and anti-Arab hate. The brutal murder of six-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume in suburban Chicago shocked the conscience of our state and nation and served as a painful reminder that hateful rhetoric and dehumanization can have deadly consequences. In the wake of that tragedy, AABAR took an active leadership role in supporting the community, speaking out against anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hatred, and continuing longstanding efforts to educate legal professionals, public officials, and the broader public about the real-world harms caused by bigotry and intolerance.

For years, AABAR has worked alongside community leaders, bar associations, educational institutions, and advocacy organizations through public education initiatives, CLE programming, civic engagement, and advocacy aimed at confronting Islamophobia and anti-Arab discrimination. We have consistently emphasized that leaders across the political spectrum bear a responsibility to speak carefully, truthfully, and responsibly about marginalized communities.

At moments like this, our country requires principled leadership that rejects bigotry in all forms and reaffirms the dignity and humanity of every person, regardless of faith, ethnicity, or national origin.

AABAR stands in solidarity with the Muslim community in San Diego and with Muslim communities across the country. We remain committed to advancing civil rights, combating hate and discrimination, and ensuring that all people are able to live, worship, and participate in civic life free from fear.