

Countering Myths About American Muslims & Their Views on Islam-linked Extremism

This is latest post in an ongoing series of articles that address some of the most prevalent misconceptions about Islam and Muslims in America. For more information about the motivation behind the series, please read the [first installment](#).

Each common misconception is followed by the evidence-based reality. Recommendations for further reading appear at the end of this article.

Misconception: American Muslims are not concerned about extremism and violence carried out in the name of Islam.

Reality: American Muslims are more concerned about extremism and violence carried out in the name of Islam than the general American public.

The results of a [newly-released survey](#) by the Pew Research Center for Religion and Public Life reveal that 66% of American Muslims are “very concerned” about “extremism in the name of Islam around the world,” compared to 49% of the general public. Similarly, 49% of American Muslims are “very concerned” about “extremism in the name of Islam in the U.S.,” compared to 43% of the general public. [According to Pew](#), concern (those answering that they were either “very” or “somewhat” concerned) about extremism in the name of Islam has grown 10% among American Muslims since their last survey in 2011.

Misconception: American Muslims believe that targeting and killing civilians to further a political or religious cause is justified.

Reality: American Muslims are more likely than the general American public to believe that targeting and killing civilians to further political, social, or religious causes is *never* justified.

[According to the latest Pew survey](#), 76% of American Muslims believe that targeting civilians is never justified, compared with 59% of the general American public. More devout and less devout Muslims reject violence against civilians at the same rates.

Misconception: American Muslims and their community leaders never or rarely denounce violence carried out in the name of Islam.

Reality: There are at least 660 documented instances of American Muslim individuals or organizations condemning terrorism carried out by Muslims.

The specific number 660 refers to the number of instances retrieved when searching “American” in the database of [MuslimsCondemn.com](#), a database of documented condemnations of violence in the name of Islam by Muslims, which was created by [Heraa Hashmi](#). There are undoubtedly countless more undocumented instances, including times when individual American Muslims condemned such acts privately to their friends family and co-workers.

Further Reading

[Arguing the Just War in Islam](#) by John Kelsay

[U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream: Findings from Pew Research Center’s 2017 Survey of U.S. Muslims](#) from the Pew Center for Religion and Public Life

Previous Installments in this Series

Part 1: [The First Muslim-Americans](#)

Part 2: [Demographics](#)

Part 3: [The “American-ness” of Muslims](#)

Part 4: [Mosques](#)

Part 5: [Relationship with the American Jewish Community](#)