

Countering Myths about American Muslims & Their Relationship with the American Jewish Community

This is part of an open-ended series that will address some of the prevalent misconceptions about Islam and Muslims in America. Read about the motivation behind the series in the [first installment](#).

Each sets of misconceptions is followed by the reality. Recommendations for further reading appear at the end of this article.

Misconception: American Muslims are inherently anti-Semitic.

Reality: The Muslim and Jewish communities in America are actively working to increase inter-religious dialogue, as well as cooperation on social and political causes.

Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories remains a very real and emotional issue for many American Muslims and the [majority of American Jews](#) have strong positive feelings toward the State of Israel (although it is important to note that [attitudes toward settlements and the Israeli government's efforts toward a peace process are much more negative](#)). In the past ten years, however, major groups representing both American Muslims and Jews have been deliberately forging connections. For example, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Union for Reform Judaism began an [interfaith dialogue partnership](#) by [exchanging speakers for their respective annual conventions](#). ISNA is currently involved in three Muslim-Jewish [interfaith programs](#), as well as three Muslim-Christian programs.

In addition to exchanges and dialogues at the leadership level, there are numerous organizations building grassroots ties between the two communities. One example is the [Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom \(SOSS\)](#), which has [expanded to include fifty chapters in twenty states](#) since its founding just six years ago. SOSS aims to bring together ordinary American Muslim and Jewish women to exchange experiences, break bread, and build lasting relationships.

The 2016 U.S. presidential election has, for multiple reasons, increased both the visibility of and need for mutual support between members of the American Muslim and Jewish communities. During the Democratic Party primary campaign, Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, received widespread and vocal support from members of the American Muslim community. Sanders won the primary in the state of Michigan, in part, because he had such strong support within the Muslim community. [Sixty-percent of voters in the city of Dearborn](#), which has one of the largest percentage of Muslim residents of any city in the country, voted for Sanders.

[Read More: [Muslims Love Bernie Sanders, But the Media Doesn't Get It](#)]

After the election, and the explosion of [both anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish violence](#) that has come in its wake, American Muslims and Jews have been [rapidly forming new partnerships](#). One of the largest and most notable is the [Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council](#), created by the American Jewish Committee and ISNA. The group's three primary goals are to celebrate the contributions of Jews and Muslims to American society, develop a coordinated strategy to address anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic bigotry, and work to expand and protect the rights of religious minorities to practice their faith in America.

Further Reading

[Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities](#) edited by Reza Aslan and Aaron Tapper

[A Portrait of Jewish Americans](#) from the Pew Forum

[American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections](#) from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

Previous Installments in this Series

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

Part 2: [Demographics](#)

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

Part 4: [Mosques](#)