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Specific Purpose Statement: To inform my audience about the social injustices Muslims face.

Central idea: Every day Muslims are targeted merely because of the religion they follow and the misconception that they are terrorists.

Beep. Beep. The metal detectors screeched as I walked through them. It was the first time my school installed metal detectors. Now, I merely was wearing my golden earrings. The sound startled me. Confused as to why the alarm went off in the first place, I started to look around and noticed that all eyes were on me. “BOOM, BANG, ALLAH AKBAR”, I suddenly hear people shout, while they laugh hysterically. It was extremely embarrassing, to say the least. This is a social norm most Muslims have to face every day. Everywhere I go, I see Muslims being portrayed negatively. This outgoing hatred and racism have spread ever since the 2016 election, all thanks to the beloved man in the office.

Today, I'd like to inform you about the social injustices Muslims face. Let's start by looking at how it degrades Muslims.

The media constantly portrays Muslims as terrorists. The news is stereotypical and highlights Muslims as the cause of the problem. After 9/11, the media has been depicting Muslims as violent, fatal extremists who promote groups like Al Qaeda and Isis. There is a sense of white privilege in our society. If a white person was to commit the same crime as a Muslim, the white person would have an advantage as the media will most likely say they're mentally ill while a Muslim would immediately be identified as a terrorist. According to the New American Foundation, more Americans are killed by white terrorists than Muslim ones. Between 2004 and 2015, there were nine terror attacks in the US by self-proclaimed Islamist extremists, but there were 18 terror attacks by white non-Muslims.

The media brainwashes people into having the wrong mindset. The news ignites fears and suspicions towards Muslims in America. A 2016 study by Chapman University showed Americans' second biggest fear was Islamic terrorist attacks, even though only 94 Americans were killed between 2005 and 2015 through such attacks. Yet during that same period, there were 301,797 gun-related deaths in America. Most of the fears white Americans have of Muslim-Americans are unfounded in reality. It's based on politicians like Donald Trump and biased media like Breitbart and Fox News whipping them into a mob-like frenzy so they don't bother to look at the facts.

Muslims are verbally harassed most of the time. Most Muslims can say that they were verbally harassed at least once in their lifetime, especially ones that are covered. "Get out of my country" is a phrase stated by many racists. Other ignorant people might use bombs to symbolize "the destruction caused by Muslims". I once had an argument with a guy on the train. His comeback was "What are you gonna do? Bomb my house". Muslims are also physically harassed. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of active anti-Muslim hate

groups has tripled in one year: up from 34 in 2015 to 101 in 2016. In the first 34 days following the election of President Trump, there were 1,094 hate crimes in the US. My mother was the victim of physical harassment. As she was walking down the street, her scarf was pulled off her head. Can you even imagine the fear that would have ignited in her at that specific moment because the rage and fear I feel to this day thinking back is indescribable. The sad reality is that she isn't the only one who was attacked in a situation like this. Multiple Muslims face this injustice.

The constant hate and discrimination against Muslims instill a sense of inferiority and self-hate within them. Immigrants who travel miles away from their homes to have a chance at a better life in America feel like they don't belong here. And no matter how hard they try to change themselves and be something they're not just to please people, they will not be accepted as Americans. To be clear, I know not every single American out there is like that but all it truly takes is one hate comment or a racial slur to reverse all the progress one has made so far. It breaks my heart to hear the atrocities done to Muslims after 9/11 and the ones that are being done to them in the present day just because they choose to believe in a different God.

Today, Muslim-Americans face increasing hostility in the form of violence and/or discrimination. At the end of the day, we are all human. No matter what. Just because the media says one thing does not mean it's true. Not all Muslims are terrorists. Also, just because you hate someone, doesn't mean you can't keep that thought to yourself. I demand respect for my Muslim sisters and brothers. I can try and say that there is a permanent solution to this but truth be told there is not. Nothing can be done to remove bias and hate from people's hearts who make a conscious choice to be ignorant towards their fellow human beings every single day. The only temporary solution I can think of is if the government steps in, which again is very unlikely, and

sets consequences for hate crimes and hate speech against minorities and makes them effective immediately then maybe people will back down. Other than that, I'm not very hopeful as much as I want to be, there is no light of hope for my fellow American Muslims and other minorities in this country.

To end off my speech, I want to share a quote from Malcolm X: if you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing. I hope everyone listening to this is able to do better by their fellow human beings because all we really have is each other. Thank you.

Bibliography

- Jabbar, Abdul. The Challenges of Being a Muslim in America Today. TheNewArab. 13, March 2017,
<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/3/12/the-challenges-of-being-muslim-in-America-today>