MEDIA JUSTICE NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

Media Justice Network Calls for Fair, Fear-Free Election Coverage of Muslim and Arab Americans

Statement of Media Justice Network | October 29, 2026

As Americans prepare to vote on November 3, Media Justice Network calls on American and Arabic-language news organizations to hold their coverage of Muslim and Arab communities to the standard they apply to every other community: verify before amplifying, attribute every allegation, and never treat a person's faith, name, ancestry or family as evidence of disloyalty or danger.

Why this matters now

Rights and research groups have raised concerns about the climate facing Muslim Americans in this election. In its October 2026 report, "Targeting the Muslim Vote: Far-Right Intimidation Ahead of the Midterms," the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) says it is concerned that anti-Muslim provocations and federal interference could create barriers to voting for minority communities. Among the stages of the pattern it describes is "amplification through media or social platforms, where incidents are framed as evidence of broader criminality, extremism, or institutional failure." MPAC uses "coordinated campaign" as an analytical framework that does not require formal organizational coordination or direct communication between participants. Middle East Eye summarized the report on October 29.

The Guardian reported on October 21 that, according to the Center for the Study of Organized Hate, Islamophobic posts naming Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate in Michigan, rose almost 1,900 percent in the week after his primary win. The figure counts posts naming one candidate. It does not measure media coverage or conditions for Muslim voters generally, and it is cited here as documentation, not as an endorsement.

Media Justice Network is a nonprofit that monitors and documents how media cover minority communities. This statement does not endorse or oppose any candidate or party, and it does not claim to know the motives of any outlet or speaker. Our concern is the role of coverage: what is repeated, how it is framed, and whether the people being discussed are heard. Coverage can shape how safe a community feels taking part in public life, whatever anyone intended.

Scrutiny of candidates is part of journalism. Questions grounded in evidence about a candidate's conduct, statements, policies and funding are legitimate for candidates of every faith. The line is crossed when religious identity alone is treated as grounds for suspicion or as a loyalty test, or when a whole community is asked to answer for the conduct of individuals.

What we ask of newsrooms

1. Verify, then attribute. Label allegations as allegations. Say when no evidence has been presented. Do not let a headline state as fact what the article only attributes to a speaker.

2. Judge candidates by their record. Do not use a candidate's faith, given name, ancestry, relatives or community ties as a substitute for evidence. Where ties are alleged, report what is documented and what is not.

3. Do not generalize. Report the conduct of a person or group as theirs. Avoid language that assigns collective guilt, loyalty tests or "takeover" narratives to Muslim and Arab communities.

4. Offer a real right of reply. Give the people and communities named a chance to respond before publication, report their response with comparable prominence, and correct errors clearly and quickly.

5. Cover election week with care. Report voting access, polling-place procedures and any intimidation from named officials and documented evidence. Do not amplify unverified claims of fraud or threat tied to Muslim neighborhoods, mosques used as polling places or Arab American voters, and do not amplify provocations for the sake of a viral clip. The same verification applies to claims of intimidation.

6. Use one standard in every language. These principles apply equally to English-language, Arabic-language and other outlets, including coverage in the Arab world of American Muslims.

Media coverage should never be used to intimidate Arab and Muslim Americans in order to influence, pressure or change their decision about whether, or for whom, to vote.

About Media Justice Network

Media Justice Network is a nonprofit organization that monitors, documents and reports on media equity issues. Website: mediajusticenetwork.org. Media contact: info@mediajusticenetwork.org.

Sources

MPAC, election security page describing the October 2026 report: https://www.mpac.org/election-security

Middle East Eye, October 29, 2026: https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/anti-muslim-provocation-could-deter-community-us-midterm-elections-advocacy-group

The Guardian, October 21, 2026: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/oct/21/abdul-el-sayed-michigan-senate-democrats