

The Racial Persecution of the Arab Community and Potential Solutions

The racial prejudices within the United States against the Arab community has only grown with the perceived rise of Islamic terrorism and misconceptions of the Middle East. Following the attacks of September 11, there was an exponential increase in anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiments, leading to mass prejudice against the Arab and Muslim communities in the US. There is another tenet to this prejudice, the Arab minorities living in America that were grouped together with distinct societal differences. For example, my family is a part of the Chaldean minority from Iraq, a small group of Catholics extending from Baghdad to Deir-al Zour in Syria. When they emigrated to California, everyone was identified as one religious and ethnic group, without considering the vast composition of the Middle East. Within one country alone, Iraq, there are more than a [dozen ethnic minorities](#), each with unique religious and cultural distinctions. That is why it is truly infuriating when politicians and citizens generalize the cultural composition of the Middle East, in turn affecting foreign policy. Within the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States directly ignored the ethnic and religious differences within these countries, leading to the creation of sectarian strife and conflict. Inside the United States, the lack of sympathy for religious and ethnic differences within the region are best summarized by ethnicity surveys, with the only option being "white/Middle Eastern", grouping radically different cultures into one answer. Therefore, as a policy initiative, I would advocate for a massive education campaign educating Americans on the Middle East, Africa and Asia, to grant a larger breadth of understanding and compassion for different cultures. By learning about different cultures, it would be more difficult to generalize and judge, therefore alleviating the issue at hand.

— Andy Essa