

Resolution No.:	<u>19-55</u>
Introduced:	<u>March 19, 2019</u>
Adopted:	<u>March 19, 2019</u>

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: Reaffirming the Council's Solidarity with the Muslim Community and Denouncing Acts of Terrorism, Islamophobia, and Hate

Background

1. On March 15, 2019 during *Jumu'ah* which is also known as Friday Prayer, the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand were attacked by a white supremacist who premeditated the execution of at least 50 Muslim worshipers and seriously injured at least 50 individuals.
2. According to the Global Terrorism Database, compiled by the University of Maryland, attacks on mosques and Muslim religious leaders have increased in recent years. North America, Europe, and Oceania saw 128 attacks from 2010-2017.
3. The freedom to worship as one chooses is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution under the First Amendment. In Montgomery County this freedom is honored and protected for all people.
4. Montgomery County has the largest population of foreign-born residents in the State of Maryland with nearly one-third of our residents coming from other countries.
5. The County is fortunate to be home to more than 60,000 Muslim residents who make up approximately six percent of the total population.
6. The County's Muslim community is valued and respected. Muslim residents contribute to the welfare of our greater community through a variety of activities including but not limited to: business ownership, non-profit services, health care, professional services, research and development, information technology, and restaurant and hospitality services. These activities spur innovation, grow our economy, provide jobs, and enhance the cultural fabric of our community.
7. The Muslim community also contributes thousands of hours to volunteer efforts throughout the County that help local government close service gaps and expand the reach of public services.

8. County leaders are committed to keeping our Muslim community members safe and protected from acts of terrorism, violence, and hate. For example, in 2018 the Council approved \$200,000 in grant funding for faith-based communities targeted by hate crimes to enhance security. These grants will be made by the County Executive.
9. In the wake of the Christchurch massacre, an enhanced police presence is being provided to mosques located in the County. In addition, the Council has requested grief counselors to aid community members who may need counseling.
10. The County has a long history of protecting all individual freedoms and cultivating the community values of acceptance and tolerance. County leaders will continue to protect and defend the rights of all community members.
11. All County residents should be free to worship, work, socialize, and go about their daily lives without fear of terrorism, hate crimes, hate speech, or harassment.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

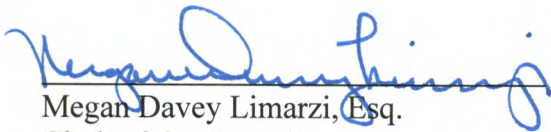
The Montgomery County Council denounces the Christchurch massacre and recognizes this terrorist attack as part of a horrifying pattern of white supremacist attacks on houses of worship and anti-Muslim sentiment fueled by hate groups.

The Council recognizes, values, and stands in solidarity with our Muslim community members during this unimaginably difficult time of grief.

The Council pledges its support to protect Muslim community members and houses of worship throughout the County from malevolent acts of violence and hate.

The Council rejects Islamophobia and xenophobia and condemns all forms of terrorism, hate crimes, and intolerance in our community and around the world.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Megan Davey Limarzi, Esq.
Clerk of the Council