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# Tanenbaum Condemns ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ and Rise of Islamophobic Hate Crimes

Last month, anonymous flyers were distributed to several communities in the United Kingdom to mark April 3<sup>rd</sup> as “[Punish a Muslim Day](#)”. The flyers promote vicious acts of violence against Muslims and recommend turning these acts of hate into some sort of sick game – in which points are awarded for different crimes. The more heinous the crime committed, the more points scored. Though the fliers first emerged in the United Kingdom, they have spread in the United States and around the world through social media.

At Tanenbaum, we are appalled, but we also know that this is not simply an isolated incident. “Punish a Muslim Day” comes at a time when hate crimes are rapidly rising both in the [United Kingdom](#) and the [United States](#).

According to the United Kingdom’s [Home Office](#), hate crimes in England and Wales increased by 29% in 2016-2017—the largest annual increase since the Home Office began documenting these crimes in 2011-2012. But religiously motivated hate crimes increased even faster, by 35% in 2015-2016. In the U.S., it is a similar story. Hate crimes have dramatically risen in the past two years, with anti-Muslim crimes rising more than 19% in 2016 and a shocking 67% in 2015. Add the mainstreaming of White Supremacy movements, and the problem becomes even more clear.

Tanenbaum’s CEO, Joyce Dubensky, notes, “‘Punish a Muslim Day’ should not only shock us, it should also remind us of the everyday danger facing our Muslim colleagues, friends and neighbors. This is unacceptable in nations that view themselves as bastions of freedom. There is no freedom when those who live within our borders are not safe from persecution and violence. In light of ‘Punish a Muslim Day’, rising Islamophobic hate crimes and political attacks, we therefore call on our elected officials *and* everyday citizens alike to protect Muslims, rather than vilifying and isolating them.”

Dubensky continued, “Just this past weekend, many Christians and Jews observed holy days focusing on freedom and the triumph of love over hate. All of our diverse traditions stand in stark contrast to ‘Punish a Muslim Day’. Isn’t it finally time to proactively address hate and celebrate respect, diversity and community?”