

To the Islamic Center of Claremont:

We, the Amnesty International chapter of Claremont McKenna College, formally and publicly express our support for your Center. We were deeply devastated and disturbed by the threatening letter recently sent to the Center. As a student-led initiative working for human rights and social justice, we are outraged to read the blatant and offensive vitriol and aggression against the Islamic Center of Claremont and the mistreatment and discrimination faced by Muslim-Americans in our country. It deeply saddens us to know that our Muslim brothers and sisters are suffering at the hands of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and threats of genocide.

No human being should have to endure or tolerate discrimination based on his or her skin color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs or personal identities. Every act of racism or discrimination is not only an act of violence but it is also an attack upon our shared dignity. Every human being is endowed with inalienable rights outlined in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 22 states "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization... of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." We, as human rights activists, wholeheartedly and undoubtedly agree. To attack the dignity of another human being is to make an attack upon their humanity, an act that dehumanizes; such are actions which have proven to incite unspeakable acts of violence. Dehumanization is the most dangerous and active threat to humanity today.

Amnesty International's founder Peter Benenson once said, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." We, as devout followers of Amnesty, seek to shine a light on the acts of injustice against Muslim Americans and individuals of other marginalized identities. We as a society cannot remain silent in the face of injustice. We cannot sit idly by as our fellow Americans are being targeted, attacked, and persecuted for their religious beliefs. Each and every American must be held accountable for his or her actions and must seek to make our country a more inclusive, respectful and compassionate nation welcoming to everyone.

We seek to use the Amnesty logo, a candle wrapped in barbed wire, as a symbol of hope to encourage each and every resident of Claremont and student and faculty member of the Claremont University Consortium to stay engaged in the fight against ignorance, racism, and Islamophobia. Do not let the flame extinguish. As long as just one person seeks to shine a light on injustice, the flame cannot and will never vanish. As such, we demand the fair and equal treatment of every Muslim-American both within and outside of the Claremont community. Every human being has the right to feel safe and secure, and free from the threat of violence because of their religion or identity.

We light a candle for every individual who has ever felt marginalized due to their religion. We light a candle for every victim of hate speech, threats of violence, and heinous acts of racism. We

light a candle for every individual who has had to question or feel ashamed of their identity. We light a candle for every individual who has felt threatened or endangered by acts of physical or emotional violence due their identities. We light a candle for every person who has been discriminated against based on their race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or personal identity.

To the Islamic Center of Claremont: we, the students of the Amnesty International chapter of Claremont McKenna College, support you. We thank you for your courage to fight for your rights as human beings. We are inspired by your strength, commitment, and dedication to human rights and to stand up in the face of injustice, discrimination, and unspeakable threats of violence. Consider us your allies and know that you are not alone. We will continue to shine a light on the injustices occurring in our shared community.

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In Solidarity,

The Amnesty International Chapter of Claremont McKenna College

In collaboration with J-Street,
3C InterVarsity Christian Fellowship,
Claremont Progressive Israel Alliance,
and Hillel at the Claremont Colleges