

# Is racial profiling justifiable? essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Is Racial Profiling Justifiable? Muslim cleric Aslam Abdullah was in Las Vegas to deliver a sermon on post-9/11 racial tolerance and was rushing back to Ontario for an afternoon meeting. He was just made his way to the back of the full plane and buckled himself into the only remaining seat when he was summoned.

‘ All of a sudden my name was announced twice on the PA,’ Abdullah recalled. ‘ Please come to the front. ’ As Abdullah walked up the aisle, the plane was silent. He felt eyes upon him, taking in his business suit, full beard, brown skin, and Muslim name. ‘ I was trying to erase those looks,’ he said.

I was embarrassed and humiliated. ’ (Catania) Would you feel the same as Abdullah if you were him? Since the 911 incident, Arabs have been the target group of security agencies, who single them out for inspection at public transport such as the airport and the subway. When asked if this action is racial profiling, all these agencies can say in justification is that all the nineteen September 11th hijackers were Arabs and that the suspicion is for the public’s safety. The phrase “ social profiling” has been bombarding us day and night, but what is it actually? The Wikipedia Encyclopedia gives a concise explanation: The use of race as one consideration in suspect profiling or other law enforcement or other law enforcement practices. While often associated with police procedures, the factors used by aviation authorities in several countries to attempt to identify potential terrorists and prevent them from boarding airplanes.

(Wikipedia) In the post-September 11th world, racial profiling is not justifiable in efforts to combat terrorism because it is ineffective, immoral, and it leads to negative consequences. Racial profiling is ineffective in curbing terrorism. All nineteen hijackers of 9/11 are alleged affiliated with Al-Qaeda, which has an unclear structure. Nobody knows how many members it actually has, ranging from millions to zero.

If there are just one hundred Al-Qaeda members worldwide, isn't it ridiculous to suspect billions of Arabs simply because of a minimal fraction who are real terrorists? Let us focus on the United States. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the nation already had an Arab population of one million in 2000, increased by 38.3 percent in ten years (United States).

Most Arab Americans do not want to destroy their country, but their appearance still resembles the Arabs in the Middle East. Moreover, Arabs are not necessarily Muslims, and Muslims are not necessarily members of Al-Qaeda or other terrorist organizations. Even if an Arab is more likely to be an Al-Qaeda member than any other race, is it sufficient to judge one's race simply by his or her appearance? Brown skin hardly tells anything. Unlike black and white which are distinctive, a brown-skinned man can be a Mexican, a Hispanic, a Thai, an Indonesian, and there are many other possibilities. Would a terrorist be so stupid to appear Muslim when he knows the security is eyeing his group? A columnist of the New York Times warned commuters "to be more aware of young men praying to Allah and smelling like flower water", citing suggestions from the Department of Homeland Security that suicide bomber indicators include a "shaved head or short

haircut. A short haircut or recently shaved beard or moustache may be evident by differences in skin complexion on the head or face” (Sperry A25).

Are these really good indicators of a suicide bomber? Wearing perfume and having a short haircut are extremely common. And if a terrorist wants to disguise himself, he can simply not spray perfume on himself and wait for one month or two after shaving so that the skin complexion becomes the same. If we look at the past, we will find that terrorists are not only Arab, but also white: In the Moscow theatre hostage crisis which shocked the world, Chechen rebels seized a crowded Moscow theatre, taking over 700 hostages. Finally, all the terrorists were killed, along with 130 of the hostages (Wikipedia).

You may say this is just the political conflicts between Chechnya and Russia, but who knows if the Chechen will form an ally with Middle-Eastern terrorists one day? Not only is racial profiling fallible, it is also evil. Racial profiling is immoral. Khan, a Pakistani journalist who frequently crosses national borders, is often detained for questioning when he enters America. He was once ushered into a black room and was interrogated by two officials for three hours.

“ I’d been made to feel like an unwanted outsider, as if I were guilty of some heinous crime and now it was my responsibility to prove my innocence,” Khan said (Khan 464-68). Khan might feel a bit better as there were only three people in the room, but Abdullah was forced to leave the plane in front of all passengers. Abdullah said he was “ trying to erase those looks,” but the impact of this experience on him might not be as easily removable as he

thought. Amnesty International USA (AIUSA), a Nobel Prize-winning grassroots activist organization, views the impacts of racial profiling on the victims as follows: even when excessive force is not involved, incidents of racial profiling often have a long-lasting impact on their victims.

Individuals who reported such incidents to AIUSA during the last twelve months frequently cited: feelings of humiliation, depression, helplessness, anger, and fear, diminished trust in law enforcement, and reluctance to turn to law enforcement for help. (Amnesty International USA) Racial profiling is cruel to its innocents because it makes them lose trust in everything.

Imagine you are living in a world in which you cannot trust everyone. Can you bear this endless ordeal? Besides individual problems, racial profiling also brings cost to the society.

Some people support social profiling in a sense of sacrificing a tiny portion of citizens for the safety of the whole nation, but they are actually sacrificing much more than they think. One distressed individual may not affect the society, but we are now talking about one million Arab Americans. If each of them has been wounded by racial profiling and gather together to vent grievance, what will the outcome be? Even if they manage to stay calm, they have developed a deep mistrust of the police. Security relies on citizens' cooperation with the police, but the practice of racial profiling is alienating the very people whose support the police need: young Muslims.

In a news program, Professor Frank Wu of Howard University School of Law said, “ During World War Two Japanese Americans formed the intelligence units that did the translation and did much of the intelligence work behind

our effort to fight Japan,” suggesting that Arab Americans “ could be better to help us in this war [against terrorism] with individuals who understand the cultural background that we’re contending with” (PBS). Furthermore, while scrutinizing one group of subject men, we are distracted from pinning down real terrorists who share no similarities to the typical ones. During the tragic sniper attacks three years ago, “ police officers were looking for an antisocial white male, the standard profile of a serial killer. ” Indeed, the police “ ended up arresting two black men, raising questions about whether racial profiling inadvertently enabled the snipers to continue their killing spree” (Goering). National security is important, but attaining it through racial profiling is undesirable. Racial profiling against terrorism is ineffective as the word “ terrorist” is not carved on the face; it is immoral as it humiliates innocents and causes them distress and despair.

It even generates bad results as it sparks anger among the community, and it makes us overlook other possible suspects of terrorists. Equality has been our core value since our nation was born. When can we reconstruct our harmonious global village? Work Cited Amnesty International USA. Amnesty International. 21 Nov.

2005.

pdf>. Catania, Sara. Flying While Brown. ” LA Weekly. 6 May 2003.

21 Nov. 2005.

com/ink/printme. php? eid= 44652>. Goering, Curt. “ Statement of Curt Goering. ” Amnesty International USA.

<https://assignbuster.com/is-racial-profiling-justifiable-essay/>

13 Sep. 2004. 16 Nov. 2005.

amnestyusa.org/uspolicy/document.do?id=31BDEDADCDF0198A85256F0F0047D8E7>. Khan, Adnan. "Close Encounter with US Emigration.

"The Brief Bedford Reader. Ninth Edition. X. J. Kennedy, Dorothy M.

Kennedy, and Jane E. Aaron. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

464-468. "Profile of a Terrorist." Online NewsHour. Gwen Ifill.

PBS, Alexandria. 26 Sep. 2001. Sperry, Paul. It's the Age of Terror: What Would You Do? "New York Times. 28 July 2005: A25.

17 Nov. 2005. .

United States. U. S. Census Bureau.

The Arab Population: 2000. Washington: GPO, 2003. Dec. 2003.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-23.pdf>>. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.

15 Nov. 2005.

org/wiki/Racial\_profiling>. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 22 Nov. 2005.

.