

I rise

AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION

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Ever since terrorists attacked on 9/11, people started discriminating against Muslims. How ironic it is that, people would disrespect them, show them hostility, and then exaggerate that they are terrorists; this unfortunate reality is not logical at all. There are obviously criminals who come from all different backgrounds, but it's sad to say that the term "terrorists" is used to describe Muslims. There is the popular stereotype "all Muslims are terrorists," as well as the opposite "not all Muslims are terrorists."

I started wearing a hijab when I was a junior in high school. I was planning on wearing it during the summer before my junior year despite the hate and discrimination that I was aware of. I wanted to wear it so badly that I hid this desire from my parents. So without their knowledge, I was planning to wear it. Because of this, they found out that first morning of my junior year when they saw that unique piece of colorful scarf wrapped around my head with my outfit. I can imagine how concerned they felt about my unexpected decision, but they didn't force me to take it off. Instead, they kept implying and suggesting that I shouldn't wear it. Despite all this, I guess I was curious as to what my life would be like with my hijab in the real world.

To my surprise, it wasn't as horrible as I expected. In fact, my teachers and classmates treated me with as much kindness and respect as they had before I became a hijabi. Because of this, hope and happiness rose in my heart, which got me to believe that there are people out there who know for sure "not all Muslims are terrorists." However, for those who do see Muslims as terrorists, I just hope that they can

widen their mind, open their eyes, and observe our behavior, ethics, and conduct. This will enable them to see the character of Muslims so they'll come to believe that Muslims also have morals and manners. If this happens, then Islamophobia will decrease and our compassion towards one another will strengthen.

