



# Noor Salman: A Survivor Hunted by the Terror- Industrial Complex

A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR NOOR SALMAN  
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE  
ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN

NOVEMBER 25, 2021

## NOOR SALMAN: A SURVIVOR HUNTED BY THE TERROR-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

On this **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, the Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia loudly affirms our unwavering support for Noor Salman, a survivor wrongfully criminalized by the criminal justice system and War on Terror logics. During the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women, we find it imperative to hold space for the often invisibilized survivors of state and interpersonal violence, like Noor Salman. We reject the legitimacy of state apparatuses that vilify the traumatized. We also condemn the ways our communities, too, stigmatize and punish survivors in ways that mirror the criminal justice system. We recognize that those like Salman are vulnerable to multiple forms of violence and are too often left with nowhere to turn- caught at the harsh intersections of gendered Islamophobia.

Noor Salman is a Palestinian-Muslim domestic violence survivor who was criminalized by Zionism, Islamophobia, and state-sanctioned misogyny. While many knew Mateen's name, few were aware of Salman's multi-year rotation between jail, interrogation, and house arrest during a drawn out trial rooted in unjustified vengeance. In 2016, following the shooting, the families of the Pulse victims, US public opinion, and the US government unequivocally condemned Salman as someone who "[knew he \[Omar Mateen\] would attack.](#)" The US government prioritized national security interests by omitting information regarding [Seddique Mateen's role as an FBI informant](#), in turn limiting defense access to information that proved Salman's innocence. The Pulse families were ruthless in their attack against Salman, convinced "someone should pay." The fact that "that someone" was a survivor caught between interpersonal violence and structural Islamophobia was lost on most, especially those at the forefront of prosecutory efforts.



The Pulse shooting also became a platform through which Zionist and Islamophobic political agendas were able to grow their support. For example, former Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, released a [video](#) condemning the actions of Mateen as “radical Islamic terror” driven by conservatism. He then paralleled the Pulse shooting to the actions of anti-Zionist operations challenging Zionism, attempting to delegitimize Palestinian struggles for safety and liberation. In the US, Mateen was framed as a violent Muslim man who demonstrated the dangers of Islam but in reality he had an unwavering commitment to [security, policing, and corrections](#)- the epitome of American masculinity. Pulse [became the final impetus](#) necessary to garner bi-partisan support for the expansion of [Countering Violent Extremism \(CVE\)](#), an Islamophobic program masking informancy with resources, as well as [expanding resources supporting intelligence exchanges among federal agencies and local communities](#).

Recently, Salman released an [interview](#) detailing what her life has been like since her acquittal. Though found “not guilty,” Salman explains her life has felt like an ongoing sentence- the retraumatization of her trial and its extended aftermath have conjured never-ending scrutiny that forces her to live in constant fear. Though “free,” Salman confides she rarely goes out and, when she does, limits her time to a few minutes to avoid recognition and anticipated confrontation.

Therefore, as the Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia, we are calling upon the broader anti-violence movement that addresses gender-based violence, and our Muslim communities, to support survivors targeted by the national security, immigration enforcement, and racist legal system.



Our recommendations include the following:

- Read the [Community Report on Gendered Islamophobia](#) to better understand how GI impacts our community members.
- Reject the notion of perfect victims and support survivors irrespective of the amount of evidence, the complexity of the case details, or the falsified state narratives that criminalize them.
- Gain competency in understanding the ways criminalization systems impact survivors. For Muslim and SWANA survivors, build an infrastructure that can adequately respond to the needs of mothers and survivors caught in the federal terrorism dragnet.
- Delink VAWA funding from the Department of Justice and house it within agencies that aren't directly responsible for engaging in federal terrorism prosecutions, spying, and carrying out the War on Terror apparatus. For more specific policy asks, please check out our [Muslim Abolitionist Futures Policy Agenda](#) calling for the dismantling of the War on Terror, and an investment into our communities.
- Support Muslim/SWANA - led organizations and leadership who have a clear awareness on the ways survivors navigate the immigration enforcement, national security, and the criminal justice system.

To our communities:

- Support Muslim/SWANA survivors, including Muslim/SWANA survivors targeted by the state's criminalization infrastructure, including the War on Terror. This includes addressing our community's internalized forms of Gendered Islamophobia that otherize and stigmatize women and girls targeted by criminalization.
- Draw connections between structural Islamophobia, gendered Islamophobia, gender based violence, and domestic violence.
- Challenge Islamophobic tropes used in the mainstream gender based violence field and national security that position Muslim women as needing to be "saved" from violent Muslim men in an otherizing and exceptionalizing fashion.
- Advocate for trauma informed processes for all survivors navigating the criminal justice system and resource alternative pathways to healing and justice for survivors that are community led and align with transformative justice.



# How Gendered Islamophobic violence shows up on multiple levels

**State (Government Institutions/ Law/ Policies/ Programs) :** Assumed Muslim men are tied to foreign terrorist organizations | Ignored history of domestic violence that didn't serve to profile Mateen as a terrorist | Threatened to remove child | Coerced Salman into giving false confession | FBI concealed exonerating findings for almost two years | Racist juries | Lack of legal representation | Lack of trauma-informed procedures | Solitary confinement | TSA questioning when flying

**Broader Social Society:** Labeled guilty in the court of public opinion | Jurors released a statement saying Salman was guilty after verdict | Mainstream media declared Salman guilty of concealing Mateen's plans

**Community:** Salman fears being recognized in public | Muslim community members did not want to associate with Salman | Stigma for being associated with Mateen | Stigma of being a survivor

**Family & Personal Relationships:** Salman changed the family name | Instructed son not to disclose knowledge of his father | Mateen family knew about domestic violence Mateen inflicted on Salman

**Internalized:** Salman blamed herself for not recognizing red flags in her relationship with Mateen | Had anxiety about being detained at the airport and had nightmares of her plane crashing

