



## Treating Muslims like killer Skittles: Not the best way to fight terror

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Hours before the Afghani immigrant who planted pipe bombs on both sides of the Hudson was caught, New Jersey Muslims sent out an urgent plea: If you've seen this man, call 911.

A Muslim civil rights organization based in Plainfield spread the word on Facebook, while the president of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, Mohammad Chaudry, sent out an email blast to at least 120 Muslim groups.

"We felt it was important to show the Muslim community's support for law enforcement personnel who risk their lives to protect us all," [Chaudry told 101.5](#). "The message was well-received and is a reflection of our strong working relationship with all law enforcement agencies in the state."

Indeed, that relationship is well-established nationwide. Of all the terror cases since 9-11 for which we know the sources, the largest share was [based on tips from Muslim community](#), Duke University researchers found.

These are our most important allies in this fight, assuming a suspect isn't foolish enough to fall asleep in the doorway of a bar. What Donald Trump is doing with his renewed call to step up police profiling in New Jersey is alienating the people law enforcement needs the most.

His son Donald Trump Jr.'s Twitter misfire yesterday – in which he compared Syrian refugees to poisoned Skittles, asking who would dare take a handful from a bowl if just a few "would kill you" – similarly distorts the problem.

We are already living with risk, homegrown as well as immigrant. That Skittles bowl would have to be the size of a house to reflect the real terror threat from refugees.

The chance of an American being murdered in a terrorist attack caused by a refugee is about 1 in 3.64 billion per year, according to the conservative Cato Institute – far smaller than being killed in any gun homicide (1 in 25,000).

And of the 785,000 refugees resettled in the U.S. since 9-11, fewer than 20 have been arrested on terrorism charges. So a somewhat better analogy, as argued on Twitter, might be: If 100,000 people were on death row and you were told just three were guilty, would you still treat them all as killers?

It's sad that every time an attack like this happens, ordinary Muslims have to say they're against mass murder – as 120 Muslim groups in New Jersey did yesterday. Why do they continue to do it? Chaudry said the best answer he's heard came from a member of his mosque.

"He said, even though I don't feel I need to defend myself, my non-Muslim neighbors want to know what is my position, where do I stand? And if I don't say anything, they will assume the worst."

The man added, "We don't have the big megaphone that other people have. We don't have people repeating our message on CNN. That's why we feel we have to come out."

Ordinary Muslims, whether citizens or refugees, are crucial to our fight against terrorism. By writing off hundreds of thousands of innocents, Trump only makes it harder to detect the three who might be guilty.