

WORLD & NATION

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Chapel Hill shooting sparks outrage

BY ALLISON STALBERG
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On Feb. 10, just an hour away from Guilford College, the city of Chapel Hill was rocked by a devastating tragedy.

Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, his wife Yusor Mohammad, 21, and her sister, 19-year-old Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha were all shot in the head by Craig Hicks in their home in Finley Forest Condominiums on Summerwalk Circle.

"I first heard of the tragic incident Tuesday night soon after it occurred," said sophomore Tasmia Zafar. "I have a close friend who is a freshman at Chapel Hill; she was the one that told me that three of the most incredible people had been shot and killed."

Barakat was a second-year student in the UNC School of Dentistry. He and 10 other dental students were planning to travel to treat Syrian refugees. He also worked to provide free dental supplies to the homeless in his spare time.

He and Yusor were newly married. Razan was also dedicated to charity work, supporting organizations like Global Deaf Muslim.

"For some reason I felt like I knew them — I don't know why — even though I've never met them," said sophomore Amani Hashim. "The more I read about them, the sadder I get because they are actually people with goals in life."

"They were just like us. They wanted to live peacefully. They wanted to make a change. They wanted to show that we are not the people on media, and we have

goals and dreams."

With the three victims being Muslim, national attention has been focused on how this murder is being presented. Chapel Hill police said the suspected murderer, Craig Hicks, may have killed the victims because of a parking dispute. The lack of attention to the fact that the victims were Muslim has caused international outrage.

The widespread nature of the rage appears to have been caused by the Internet and social media. Many students such as Hashim found out through the Web.

"So many people on Facebook posted articles," said Hashim. "I read the article on Tuesday night, I think. I read over it and went to bed. And the next day people were freaking out. There were posts everywhere."

"Whenever something happens they blame it on Muslims, but when Muslims get shot or they're the victims no one talks about it or they just ignore it, but why? We're humans too."

The event has brought the issue of Islamophobia forward in many communities. Muslim organizations have been vigilant in having their voices fill a void where they feel most media is not treading. Muslim voices have also spoken up at Guilford.

"We have talked about inviting speakers to Greensboro to educate and get rid of any kind of ignorance (about Islam)," said first-year Rashad Clark.

The murder has also caused some Muslim students, like Hashim, to think about their own lives, goals and identities.

"For me, it encouraged me to do something good in this life," said Hashim.



Deah Barakat (L.) Razan Abu-Salha (M.) and Yusor Abu-Salha (R.) were all shot in their home.

"I could just walk out and die. It makes me realize what ... I have done in this life. It makes me rethink my life. That's a good thing that happened out of this horrible thing."

With the wound still stinging, many are left to hope to do something for the lives lost.

"The only thing left to do now is to carry on Deah, Yusor and Razan's legacy," said Zafar. "They were kind to everyone, tried their best at everything they did and put God before anyone and anything else. If I and others can become a better person, even the tiniest bit better, then they did not die in vain."

Islamophobia and anti-Semitism rise across Europe

BY AUBREY KING
STAFF WRITER

Over the past year, pro Jewish and Muslim groups have reported a massive increase in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim attacks in European countries. At the same time, protesters have condemned the "Islamification" of their native countries all over the continent.

"There is a very long history of conflict in Europe between Christians, Muslims and Jews," said Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Department Chair Tom Guthrie in an email interview. "France is a secular state that has struggled with xenophobia and the meanings and limits of tolerance."

Indeed, France's continuing struggle with racist sentiments deserves attention, especially in the wake of recent violent extremist attacks.

"At least as many anti-Muslim acts have taken place in France since the Jan. 7-9 attacks on the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo satirical newspaper and a Jewish supermarket than for all of last year," according to an Al Jazeera America article.

Many may point to the Charlie Hebdo attacks as the catalyst for this resurgence of anti-Islamic sentiment, but the problem is deeper than that.

"I think that after 9/11, the Jewish-Islamic conflict was politicized in Europe," said Associate Professor of History and Department Chair Phil Slaby. "Secondly, I think the economic troubles of the recent recession exacerbated tensions. People that are frustrated tend to externalize problems."

During this resurgence of racism, Britain's Jewish population has also come under serious duress.

The British newspaper The Guardian cites the Community Security Trust, a charity working for Jewish Security. The charity reported 1,168 anti-Semitic incidents in 2014, compared to only 535 in 2013.

Germany, on the other hand, has recently experienced a massive spike in anti-Islamic protests and rallies. Their anti-Islamic slant emerged as a result of unique circumstances following World War II.

"After World War II, Germans hired Islamic refugees as contract workers," said sophomore Taryn McFadden in a phone interview. "The original contracts forbade these immigrants from becoming German. After 70 years, many who consider themselves natural born Germans hate these people."

The long standing tension has recently manifested itself in a variety of nationalist groups.

"Stop the radical Salfists' Islamization," reads the Facebook page of the group Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West, or PEGIDA. The group's page calls for the attendance of anti-Islamic rallies with fiery messages and video of protestors.

The group claims support in 30 German cities and 18 countries across Europe, according to CNN. Assuming these are accurate statistics, there may be more troubling incidents on the horizon.

"I can see multiple possible outcomes of the protests and demonstrations," said junior Laura Todd in an email interview. "I believe the protests will polarize the sentiment surrounding Arabs, Muslims and Jews, which means that Islamophobia and anti-Semitism will rise steeply in certain populations, but other populations will object to it fervently."

These rallies will polarize entire countries, but in the world of divided politics, some seek to take advantage.

"There is a degree of nationalism associated with some of these (racist) sentiments, and that holds a good degree of political currency right now," said Slaby. "Right-wing

parties who are angry at Brussels for EU policies, who are angry at the powers of the world or who are angry at globalization, do a good stock pushing these sentiments."

Though the continued high tensions and political divisions still warrant concern, the cloud of violence has a silver lining. Across Europe and the world, communities gather to show their strength.

Various European communities have come together in vigils and demonstrations to show support for Muslim and Jewish communities while governments condemn intolerance. Amongst a climate of negativity, many view the displays as a step in the right direction.

"Governments have to speak out and say that any intolerance is unacceptable," said Slaby. "We saw France move towards that after the Charlie Hebdo incident when the French president said prejudice like this is not okay."

Events like the demonstrations the followed Charlie Hebdo offer a different perspective on the situation. These attacks have been awful, but perhaps communities will band together in the aftermath.

Cooperation between people of all origins and religions can only help a country, and by embracing that cooperation, European governments may bring their communities closer together.



Recently in the U.K., France and Germany, violence against Jewish, Muslim and Arab individuals has increased.