



Public Statement

11 January 2026

ANIC Condemns White-Supremacist Hate Crime Against Victorian Imam and His Wife

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) condemns in the strongest possible terms the vicious and religiously motivated assault on an Imam and his wife on the evening of Saturday, 10th January 2026. This cowardly attack is a disturbing reminder of the escalating danger facing visibly Muslim Australians.

At approximately 7:30pm on the South Gippsland Highway toward Dandenong, the Imam and his wife were targeted after the assailants identified them as Muslim, triggering an outpouring of anti-Muslim hatred, racial abuse and violence. The attackers boxed in their vehicle, hurled objects at their car, drove dangerously to intimidate them, then exited their vehicle to assault the Imam and threaten his wife with stabbing. The Imam was punched in the face, and his vehicle was damaged while bystanders intervened to stop further harm.

We believe Victoria Police are treating the incident as a hate crime. The offenders, described as men of Anglo white appearance with distinctive tattoos, exhibited behaviour and language consistent with white-supremacist and extremist hate ideology, a pattern increasingly seen in Islamophobic attacks across Australia.

The psychological trauma suffered by the victims is severe. No family in Australia should fear being attacked simply for their faith, appearance, or identity.

This attack comes despite Victoria formally recognising 15th March as the United Nations International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Yet research by the Scanlon Foundation continues to show that anti-Muslim hatred is the most prevalent form of religious discrimination in Australia, underscoring that symbolic recognition must be matched with real enforcement, accountability and media responsibility.

ANIC also warns that political rhetoric and irresponsible media commentary are actively fuelling this violence, particularly the dangerous false equivalence being drawn between peaceful pro-Palestinian advocacy and the Bondi terror attacks. This framing has contributed directly to a surge in Islamophobic abuse, threats and physical assaults, both online and in our streets.

ANIC's Action Against Islamophobia (AAI) initiative is supporting the victims and monitoring this case closely, along with Board of Imams Victoria's Countering Islamophobia Project. We call for urgent identification, arrest and prosecution of those responsible, and for stronger national action to confront Islamophobia, far-right extremism and hate-fuelled violence in Australia. All Australians deserve to feel safe going about their daily lives without fear of being abused, threatened or attacked.