



**UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
(U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)**

**Hearing on  
RESPONDING TO HATE: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS  
Tuesday, July 16, 2019  
11:00 a.m.  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Room 2200**

**Opening Statement of Representative Gwen Moore**

At 10:25 am on August 5th, 2012, first responders were alerted about a shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Next month we will remember the lives of six Sikh worshippers murdered seven years ago. Six bright lights snuffed out by the cowardice and intolerance of hate-motivated violence. The Sikh and non-Sikh Oak Creek community and the world were horrified to learn that productive and loving members of their community were murdered in their holy place, their inner sanctum, their designated place to commune with God.

All of us have something to gain from those who look differently, pray differently, and speak differently. We must not wait until tragedy strikes to learn the value of mutual respect. We must seize every opportunity to denounce hate-motivated violence. In doing so, we protect the value of freedom of expression. The freedom of expression is the hallmark of democracy. To have one's voice heard is a hallmark of human dignity and the very lifeblood of democracy. This is why I count it an honor to serve as a commissioner of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. The OSCE emboldens the democratic efforts of those who stand for justice both at home and abroad.

I have spent my career advocating for policies, programs, and services that prioritize tolerance and inclusion. I have led my fellow members in protests here in the very halls of Congress that have raised global awareness for victims of terror. I have introduced resolutions to recognize the crisis of intolerant violence against Native women. One of the most prolific and influential religious actors of our time famously said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that". Let us use this truth as we examine the role of religious actors in responding to hate. Let us firmly use love and responsible policy to develop policies that will save lives and protect our most precious right to religious freedom.

I am most grateful and proud of the Wisconsinites I represent in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. They are a shining example of how to rebuild a community after a vicious and senseless attack on a community. I want to thank all of the religious, and faith-based leaders who have joined us today. I want to thank them for the solidarity they show in coming here. I also want to thank them for displaying the true strength it takes to remain resilient in the face of hate.