



NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release
June 14, 2016

Media Contact: Gerson Gomez
publicaffairs@usccr.gov
(202) 376-8371

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by a Unanimous Vote Joins the Nation in Mourning the Horrific Loss of Life in Orlando, Florida

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights joins the nation in mourning the loss of the many lives of those killed in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016. This tragedy stands as the worst mass shooting in America's history.

June is LGBT Pride Month, and the shooting occurred at a nightclub that also served as a place of LGBT safety and community empowerment. The victims of this shooting were cut down in the midst of a night of happiness and freedom, like so many other innocents who have lost their lives to radicalized individuals who have perverted Islam both here and abroad. We should also remember that although the victims of this attack were members and allies of the LGBT community, we have seen many times that self-radicalization endangers all Americans.

This tragedy reminds us that we are united as a country in protecting each other and in protecting the collective values of America. We are a diverse nation, and when one is hurt, all of us are hurt and grieve with the families of the victims. While the facts are still being gathered, this is both an act of terror and an act of hate. It appears that the victims were targeted because of their sexual orientation.

As President Obama said, "...this is a sobering reminder that attacks on any American -- regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation -- is an attack on all of us and on the fundamental values of equality and dignity that define us as a country. And no act of hate or terror will ever change who we are or the values that make us Americans."¹

Commission Chair Martin R. Castro stated, "As an act of hate, we must stand against it and stand with the victims of this crime whose civil rights have been violated and whose lives have been shattered and lost."

Our hearts go out to the victims and their families as we await more details on this heinous crime.

#####

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/06/12/president-obama-tragic-shooting-orlando>

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission's reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.