

Poll: Muslim Americans lean to moderate views

by [Haya El Nasser](#) in the [October 4, 2011](#) issue

Almost half the nation's estimated 2.8 million Muslims fault their leaders for not speaking out against Islamic extremists, but a vast majority are far more satisfied than Americans overall with the way things are going in this country, according to a major survey of U.S. Muslims.

The Pew Research Center report, termed the most comprehensive survey since 2007 at its release August 30, shows no evidence of rising support for Islamic extremism among Muslim Americans, although 52 percent say government antiterrorism policies single out Muslims for increased surveillance.

Nearly half of U.S. Muslims say their leaders have not done enough to challenge extremists. "I think we should all do more," says Hassan Jaber, executive director of Dearborn, Michigan-based ACCESS, the largest nonprofit Arab-American human services organization.

The survey shows that American Muslims have more moderate views than their brethren around the globe, yet 7 percent say suicide bombings are sometimes justified (unchanged since 2007) and 21 percent say there is a great deal or fair amount of support for extremism in their communities.

By contrast, four in ten Americans believe there is a fair amount of support for extremism among U.S. Muslims, and nearly one in five (24 percent) think Muslim support for extremism is increasing.

"They [U.S. Muslims] are mainstream and moderate in attitude," says Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center. "Most Muslims want to adopt American customs, many of their close friends are not Muslims, and they rate their economic situation pretty positively. They think like Americans."

Despite

55 percent saying that being a Muslim in the U.S. is more difficult since 9/11, Muslims are far more positive about the state of the nation (56 percent) than Americans as a whole (23 percent). Four years ago, there was more agreement on the state of the U.S.: 38 percent for Muslims and 32 percent for the general population.

The poll found

that most Muslim Americans still identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party and overwhelmingly support President Obama. —*USA Today*