

'Sniper' studio condemns anti-Muslim rhetoric

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January 29, 2015

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(RNS) As *American Sniper* continues raking in money at the box office, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee remains worried about “serious threats” being made to Arabs and Muslims.

On Tuesday (January 27), Warner Bros. issued a statement saying the movie studio “denounces any violent, anti-Muslim rhetoric, including that which has been attributed to viewers of *American Sniper*. Hate and bigotry have no place in the important dialogue that this picture has generated about the veteran experience.”

Director Clint Eastwood and Bradley Cooper, who plays real-life sniper Chris Kyle, have yet to comment, though over the weekend Eastwood called *Sniper* an anti-war film.

The film is based on Kyle’s memoir. He was shot to death in 2013 in the U.S. In the book, Kyle writes of killing 60 Iraqi “savages” during his four deployments: “Savage, despicable evil. That’s what we were fighting in Iraq.”

Since the film opened, tweets have echoed the sentiment, referring to “ragheads,” “vermin scum,” and hatred of Muslims.

Meanwhile, on a Friday episode of *Real Time with Bill Maher*, Howard Dean said anger was a driving force in the film.

“There’s a lot of anger in this country,” Dean said. “And the people who go see this movie are people who are very angry. . . . This guy basically says, ‘I’m going to fight on your side.’ And they bite for it.”

As the war of words presses on, the ADC has remained watchful. “Amid heightened attention around these issues, ADC is witnessing a continued increase in threats and

attacks against the organization and the Muslim and Arab American communities at large,” the organization said in a statement.

American Sniper has made over \$204 million at the box office, and experts say it is on track to gross more than Steven Spielberg’s 1998 record-breaking war film, *Saving Private Ryan*.

Contributor Ann Oldenburg writes for USA Today.