

## Jewish group supports mosque

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A group of Orleans County Muslims harassed earlier this week while praying in their mosque is getting support from a Jewish organization in Buffalo.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo wrote a letter Thursday, urging Orleans County District Attorney Joseph Cardone to send a message of "zero tolerance" for bigotry when he prosecutes the defendants accused of yelling obscenities, honking car horns and firing a shotgun outside the Town of Carlton mosque.

Five male teenagers [have been charged](#) with disrupting a religious service in connection with the harassment, which allegedly occurred Aug. 27 and again Monday. One of the teens also was charged with criminal possession of a weapon.

"Tensions continue to rise and tempers boil over the proposed creation of an Islamic Cultural Center near the former site of the World Trade Center in New York City. However, we were appalled to hear about the shotgun blast outside the mosque in Carlton ... and the subsequent harassment of members of the Muslim community," reads the letter, which is signed by Daniel G. Kantor, the federation's executive director, and by Ellen S. Goldstein, marketing and community relations director.

The letter encouraged Cardone to prosecute the incident as a hate crime if an investigation reveals there is basis for it.

"Regardless of the roots of the incidents, violence and hatred are never excusable," the letter continues. "This demonization and bullying in Orleans County [tears] at the heart of our pluralistic society. Freedom of religion is a cornerstone of American democracy."

Members of the World Sufi Foundation Mosque said they also have received words of support from some churches in Orleans County.