

Editorial: Orlando the latest in a horrific parade of violence

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The murder of at least 50 people in Orlando early Sunday was an act of terrorism, pure and simple. It appears to have been driven by Islamic extremism and anti-gay sentiment, and yes, once again, a gun designed for no other purpose than to kill a large number of people in a short amount of time was central to the crime.

The killings occurred near closing time of a nightclub that caters to the LGBT community, when Omar Mateen – reportedly a New York native who was living in the Fort Pierce area, 120 miles north of Miami – entered with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle and let loose in a barrage that lasted, as one of the survivors said, a song's length of time. It was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, moving instantly to the top of a list that roils the stomach. Over the next few days, investigators will try to understand the dangerous interplay of religious fundamentalism, gay hatred and whatever other motivations drove Mateen to his demented actions.

It should go without saying that not all Muslims should be blamed for the acts of fanatics and fundamentalists. That remains as true as ever. Sunday's tragedy also shows that the Obama administration has been right to view Islamic State not as some far-away militia that poses no threat to the U.S., but as a dangerous group whose hostility to this country can have immediate and terrible consequences.

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