

The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States 2008



WITHOUT FEAR OF DISCRIMINATION



CAIR
Council on American-Islamic Relations

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The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to presenting an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public. CAIR is the largest American Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, serving the interests of more than seven million American Muslims through its 35 chapters and offices nationwide and in Canada.

The vision of CAIR is to be a leading advocate for social justice and mutual understanding.

CAIR's mission is to enhance an understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

CAIR would like to thank Khadija Athman, Tena Qureshi, Robert McCaw, Katina Petersen and Aisha Javed for their help in the compilation of the 2008 CAIR report on the status of American Muslim civil rights.

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Introduction

“Who cares if the Federal courthouse is secure (which it really is not). . . Do not worry. At a time of our choosing we will find you. And we will visit each and every one of your plaintiffs whom we have heard speak. They have been ranked in order of importance as targets. . . And finally lets [sic] not forget about the families at home while you and your plaintiffs are away. . . women and children are fair game. . . you will be spared from an anonymous death.”

– Excerpt from a 2007 letter sent anonymously from Minnesota to attorney Omar T. Mohammedi, the New York lawyer for six imams, or Islamic religious leaders, suing US Airways over allegations of religious profiling during a 2006 incident in Minnesota.

Following the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, “media reports and self-proclaimed ‘terrorism experts’ linked Muslims, Arabs and ‘Middle Eastern-looking men’ to the blast. This unsubstantiated linkage prompted stereotyping, harassment and actual attacks on Muslims and Arab-Americans around America.”¹

In response, CAIR initiated the practice of documenting and publishing an annual report on the status of Muslim civil rights in the United States. The first such report, “The Price of Ignorance,” was published in 1996. An initial report detailing anti-Muslim incidents resulting from the Oklahoma City attacks was published in 1995.

The report, as is all of CAIR’s work, was “based on the premise that, like all Americans, Muslims must be able to express their religious beliefs and fulfill their religious requirements without fear of bias or discrimination.”²

This report is a summation of incidents and experiences of anti-Muslim violence, discrimination and harassment reported to CAIR during the 2007 calendar year. It is likely that significantly more incidents occurred than are recorded here because of either lack of knowledge about reporting procedures or fear. Generally, more incidents are reported in areas which CAIR is active because the communities there may be more educated about their rights, as well as more aware of their ability to report discrimination.

¹ “A Rush to Judgment: A Special Report on Anti-Muslim Stereotyping, Harassment and Hate Crimes Following the Bombing of Oklahoma City’s Murrah Federal Building, April 19, 1995,” Council on American-Islamic Relations, September, 1995

² “The Price of Ignorance: The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States 1996 Report,” Council on American-Islamic Relations, 1996

Executive Summary



For the 2007 calendar year, CAIR and its affiliate chapters processed a total of **2,652** civil rights complaints.³

Incidents of **anti-Muslim hate crime complaints went down by 19 percent**. Alleged incidents at schools or involving the police decreased **31 percent** and **42 percent** respectively.

Discrimination in the workplace increased by 18 percent, with 384 cases reported in 2006 and 452 cases reported in 2007.

Marked decreases in cases involving due process issues (45 percent), physical violence (24 percent), denials of service or access (48 percent), and verbal harassment (35 percent) were recorded.

Passenger profiling reports jumped from 32 in 2006 to 141 in 2007, a **340 percent increase**. There were also increases in reports of employment discrimination, a 34 percent increase, and denied religious accommodation, an eight percent increase.

Overall, nine states and the District of Columbia accounted for more than **80 percent** of all incidents reported to CAIR in 2007. These include: California (21 percent), the District of Columbia⁴ (19 percent), Illinois (11 percent), Florida (7 percent), New York (7 percent), Virginia (4 percent), New Jersey (4 percent), Texas (3 percent), Pennsylvania (3 percent) and Maryland (2 percent).

Consistent with previous years, an individual's ethnicity/religion or a "Muslim name" remained the primary factors that triggered discrimination. These two factors are believed to have triggered **63 percent of the total** cases reported to CAIR during the 2007 calendar year.

From the above information, past experience and observations made during the 2007 calendar year, CAIR makes the following conclusions:

1. The decrease in reports of hate crimes and reports of discrimination by police and in schools during 2007 allows us to sound a note of cautious optimism.
2. The Muslim community now has well-established organizations to advocate on its behalf. These institutions serve both to educate fellow Americans about our faith and to educate fellow Muslims about effective methods for redressing grievances through political, media and social activism.
3. Some government agencies appear to be benefiting from an emphasis on cultural proficiency for employees who may deal with Muslims.

CAIR Recommends

Based on this data and conclusions, CAIR makes the following recommendations:

1. Elected representatives, public officials and candidates for elected offices should clearly condemn anti-Islam bias in our society. Elected officials should also ensure that their respective parties similarly condemn such bias. Political strategists should avoid exploiting Islamophobic fears to gain votes.
2. Muslims and their institutions should continue to respond to negative incidents with positive educational campaigns.
3. Muslim groups should continue to maintain regular contacts with law enforcement agencies at the national, state and local levels.
4. Legislation banning racial, religious or ethnic profiling should be passed.

³ While this represents an eight percent increase in reported cases from 2006, CAIR reported hate mail and violent threats only received through the organization's general e-mail account in that year. In 2007, this tally also includes hate mail and violent threats sent directly to staff.

⁴ Washington, D.C. is the location of CAIR's national headquarters, thus this number is impacted by the inclusion of hate mail and threats as noted in footnote 3.

2007 CAIR Civil Rights Findings

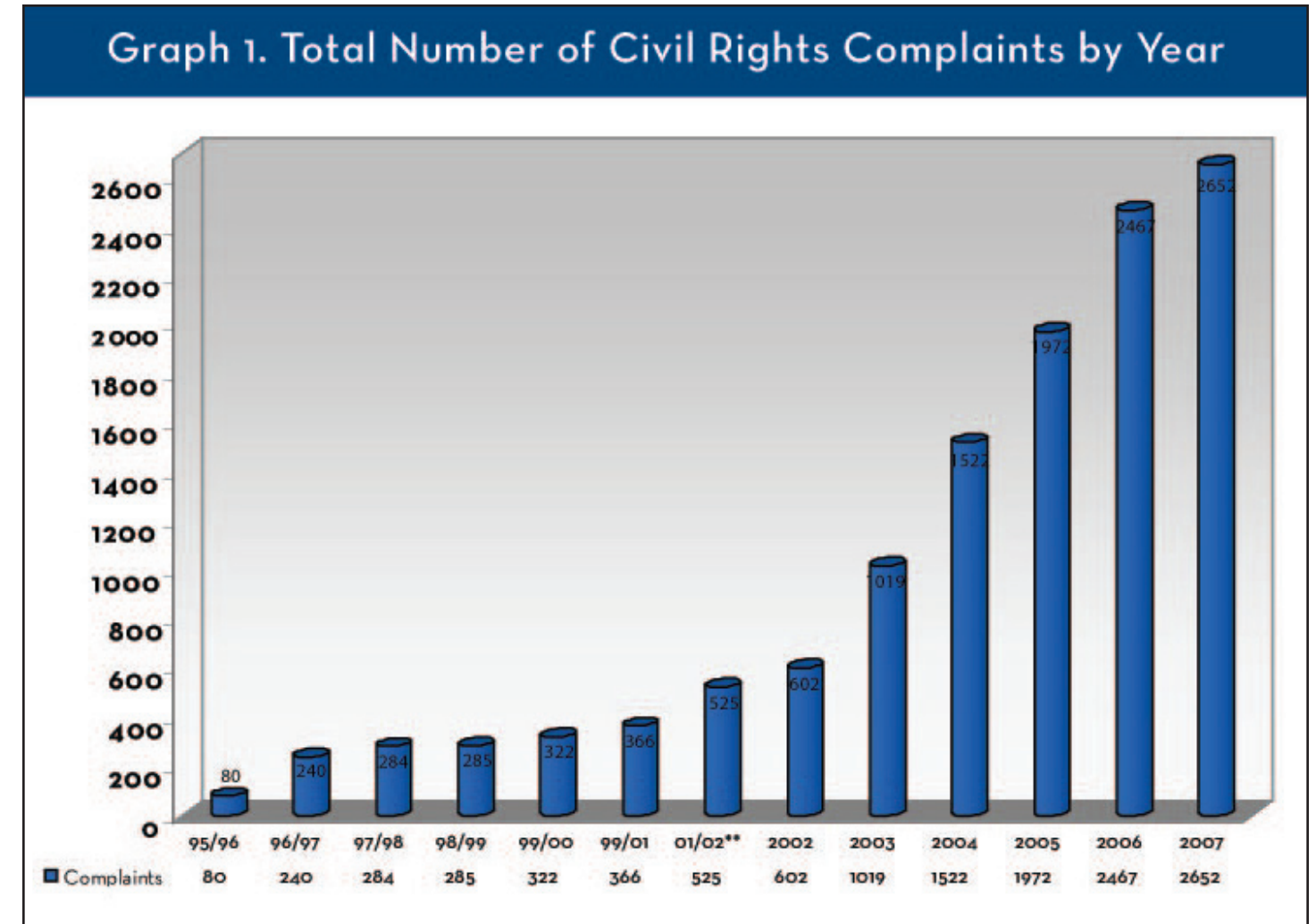


“The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “You [Muslims] do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness.”

-Sahih Al-Bukhari

Statistical Highlights

For the 2007 calendar year, CAIR and its affiliate chapters processed a total of 2,652⁵ civil rights complaints.



**Because of the significant jump in hate crimes and civil rights complaints after 9/11, CAIR issued a separate report, entitled “American Muslims: One Year After 9/11,” to analyze the 1,717 complaints CAIR received in the first six months after September 11, 2001. The report also reviews the 325 complaints CAIR received in the second six-month period after the attacks.

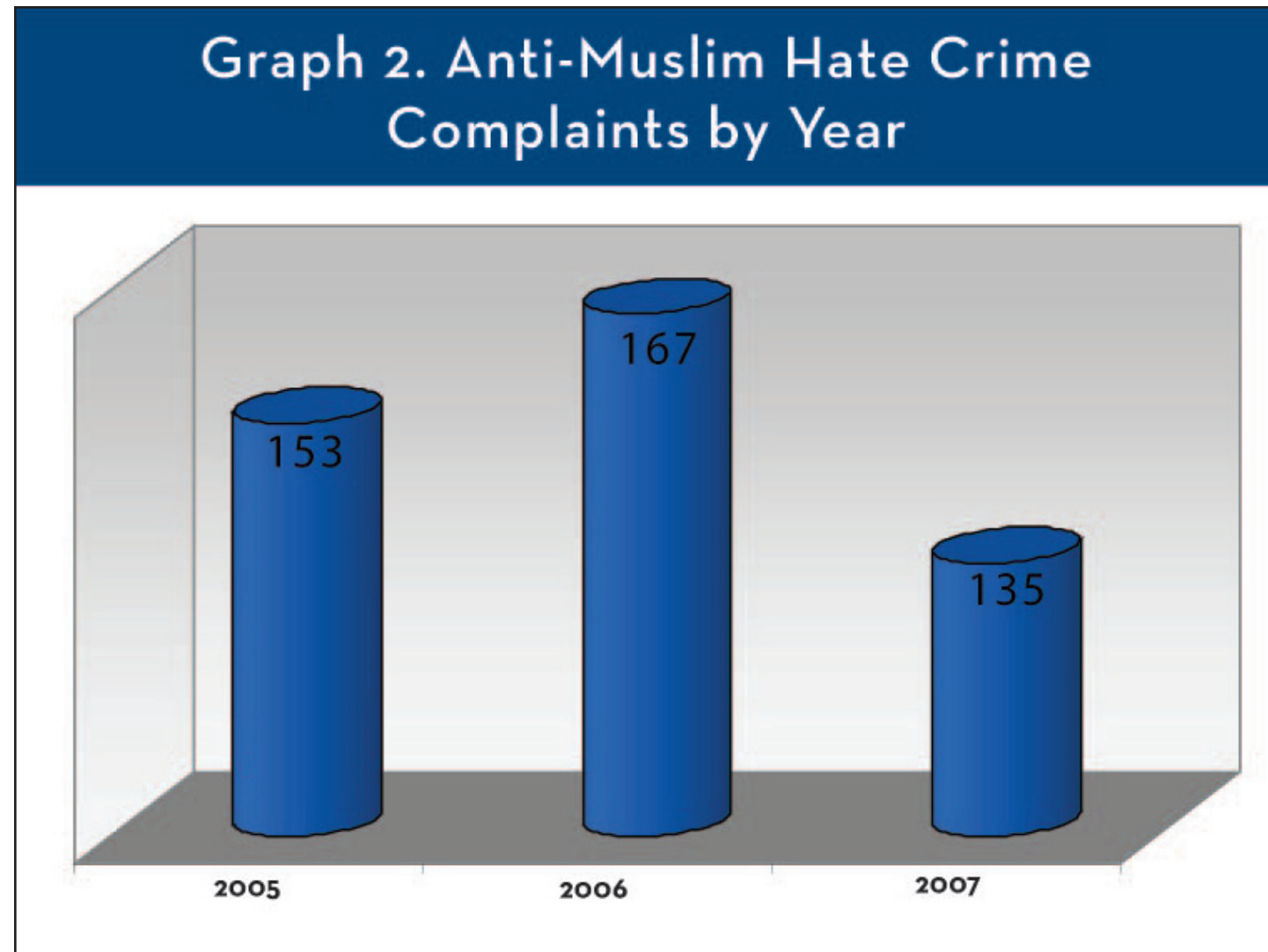
Number of Civil Rights Complaints Reported to CAIR:

2007: 2,652
 2006: 2,467
 2005: 1,972

⁵ Although CAIR received more than 3,398 reports of potential civil rights violations, it found that only 2,652 of these complaints warranted further investigation by CAIR.

Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes

Incidents of anti-Muslim hate crime complaints went down by 19 percent this year, decreasing from 167 total complaints in 2006 to 135 in 2007.



Anti-Muslim Hate Crime Complaints by Year:

2007: 135 cases
2006: 167 cases
2005: 153 cases

Civil Rights Cases by State

Over the past year, CAIR has received complaints of potential civil rights violations from all 50 states.

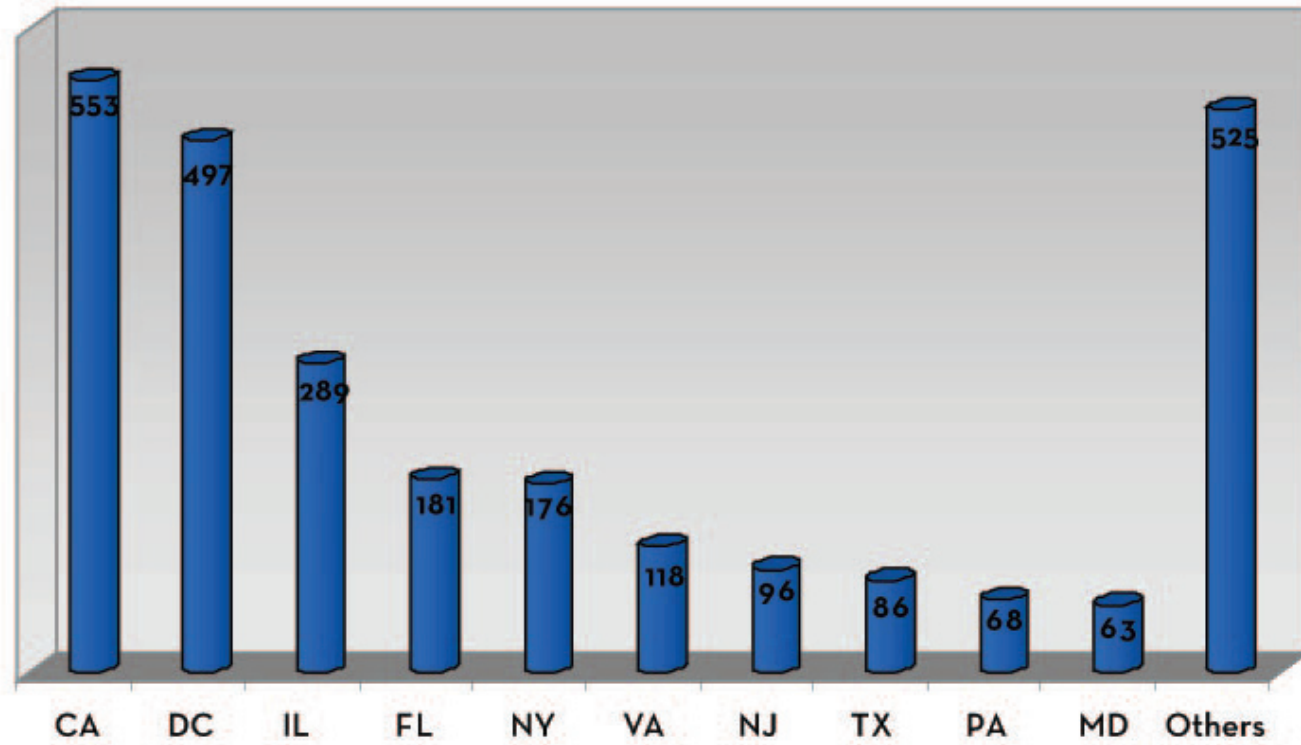
Overall, nine states and the District of Columbia accounted for more than **80 percent** of all reported incidents to CAIR in 2007. These locations (and their rounded respective percentages, see Table 1 for actual percentages) include: **California (21 percent), the District of Columbia⁶ (19 percent), Illinois (11 percent), Florida (7 percent), New York (7 percent), Virginia (4 percent), New Jersey (4 percent), Texas (3 percent), Pennsylvania (3 percent) and Maryland (2 percent).**

State	Case Count	Percentage Total
CA	553	20.85%
DC	497	18.74%
IL	289	10.90%
FL	181	6.83%
NY	176	6.64%
VA	118	4.45%
NJ	96	3.62%
TX	86	3.24%
PA	68	2.56%
MD	63	2.38%
Others	525	19.80%

California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Florida, and New York represent the 5 locations with the highest number of CAIR civil rights complaints for 2007.

⁶ Washington, D.C. is the location of CAIR's national headquarters. In 2006, CAIR reported hate mail and violent threats received only through the organization's general e-mail account. In 2007, this tally also includes hate mail and violent threats sent directly to staff.

Graphs 3. Civil Rights Complaints by State



Civil Rights Cases by Place of Occurrence

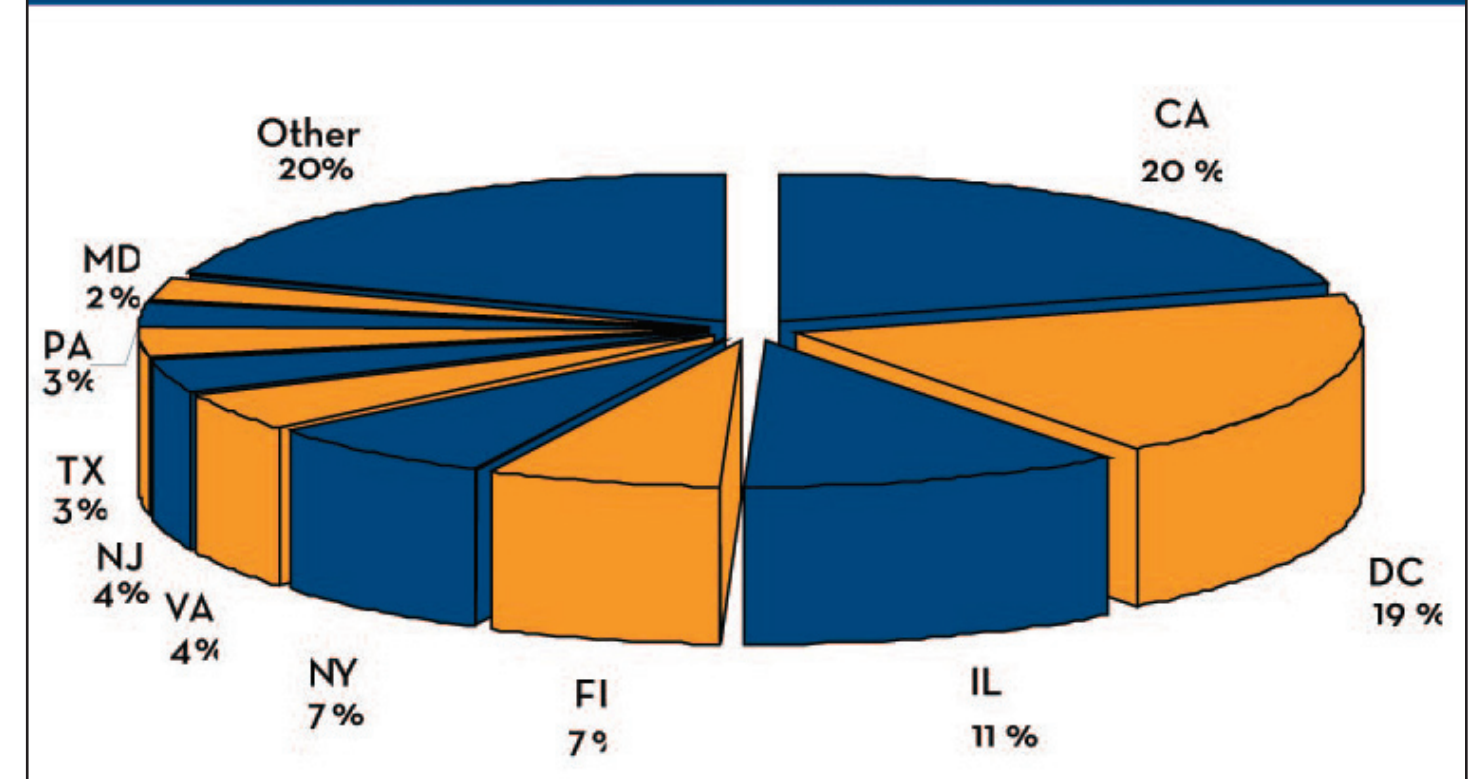
In 2007, cases reported to have occurred in schools or by the police decreased. There were 171 reported cases of discrimination in schools in 2006, and 118 in 2007. This represents a **31 percent decrease**. There were 106 cases of reported police discrimination in 2006 and 61 in 2007. This represents a **42 percent decrease**.

Discrimination in the workplace increased by 18 percent, with 384 cases reported in 2006 and 452 cases reported in 2007.

Cases reported to have occurred in prisons remained relatively steady, increasing by 2 percent from 2006 to 2007.

The highest percentage of complaints again involves government agencies. Although government agency complaints constituted 19 percent of complaints for two years in a row (2004 and 2005), then jumped to 36 percent of complaints in 2006, the number **declined** to 30 percent in 2007. This drop may in part be explained by CAIR assigning some cases to the airport category in 2007 that would have received the government agency classification in 2006.⁷

Graph 4. Percentage of Total Complaints by State



⁷ Generally, cases related to the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) occur in airports.

PLACE OF OCCURANCE	CASE COUNT	PERCENT TOTAL
Government Agency	794	29.94%
Muslim Organization/Mosque	564	21.27%
Workplace	452	17.04%
Airport	135	5.09%
Prison	130	4.90%
School	118	4.45%
Street	48	1.81%
Police	61	2.30%
Public Accommodation	52	1.96%
Court	48	1.81%
Private Home/Property	37	1.40%
Shopping Center	33	1.24%
Housing	33	1.24%
Media	25	0.94%
Financial Institution	24	0.90%
Other	78	2.94%
Muslim-owned Business	20	0.75%

In 2007, CAIR started to include threats made against the organization and its staff in the “Mosques and Muslim organizations⁸” category. This likely resulted in the dramatic rise in incidents, 221 cases in 2006 and 564 cases in 2007.

In 2006, profiling complaints attributed to the TSA were counted as “government agency;” In 2007 they were classified by location of occurrence, primarily “airport.” In 2006, 80 airport cases were reported. In 2007, 135 airport cases were reported. This **41 percent increase** is likely impacted by the change in how cases were classified.

In 2007, CAIR added Private Home/Property as a new place of occurrence to its classification system. Cases that occurred in the complainant’s home or on his or her personal property are given this classification. Prior to 2007, such cases were included in the “Housing” category. This change in reporting likely resulted in the significant drop in reported housing cases.

⁸ This category was formerly Mosque/Community Organization.

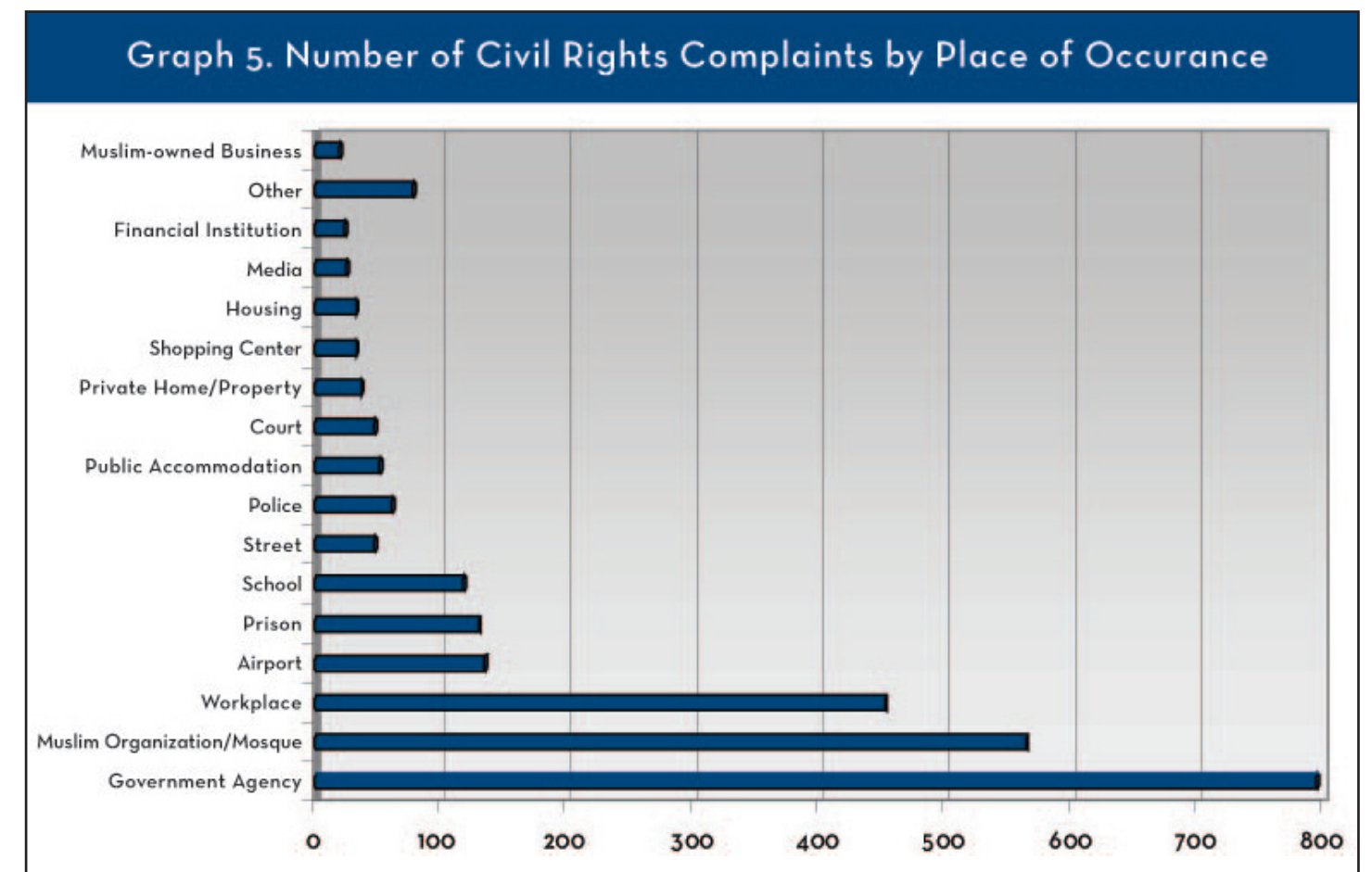
Civil Rights Cases by Type of Alleged Abuse

Marked decreases in the number of cases involving due process issues⁹ (45 percent), physical violence (24 percent), denials of service or access (48 percent),¹⁰ and verbal harassment (35 percent) were recorded.

The number of passenger profiling¹¹ reports jumped from 32 in 2006 to 141 in 2007, a **340 percent increase**. There were also increases in reports of employment discrimination (34 percent increase) and denial of religious accommodation (8 percent).

Legal/immigration¹² cases were again the most common type of alleged abuse, with the number of reported cases showing a **five percent increase**.

Alleged hate mail/propaganda/internet abuse was the second most common type of report. However, in 2007 CAIR began classifying e-mails that contained threats as “threat” rather than “hate mail.” Despite this change in classification, the category saw a **98 percent increase**.



⁹ For purposes of this report, CAIR categorizes all complaints of unreasonable arrest, detention, surveillance, interrogation, seizure and accusations into one consolidated category of “Due Process Issues.”
¹⁰ Until 2007, this category was listed as Service Denial/Public Facility.
¹¹ Previously, profiling complaints attributed to the TSA were counted as “government agency;” in 2007 they were classified by location of occurrence, primarily “airport.”
¹² This category also includes immigration issues (i.e. naturalization delays) and other civil domestic case complaints, which were reported separately in 2002. Also, the category “unequal treatment,” which appeared separately in previous reports, was consolidated within this category in 2003.

Table 4. Case Reports by Type of Alleged Abuse

TYPE OF ALLEGED ABUSE	CASE COUNT	PERCENT TOTAL
Legal/Immigration	767	28.92%
Hate Mail/Propoganda/Internet	613	23.11%
Employment Discrimination	281	10.60%
Denied Religious Accommodation	240	9.05%
Due Process Issues	203	7.65%
Passenger Profiling	141	5.32%
Physical Violence	98	3.70%
Other	70	2.64%
Verbal Harassment	69	2.60%
Denial of Service/Access	64	2.41%
Violent Threat	37	1.40%
Housing Discrimination	29	1.09%
Racial/Religious Profiling	28	1.06%
Business Discrimination	12	0.45%

Legal/Immigration and Hate Mail/Propaganda/Internet complaints accounted for **52 percent** of the total cases reported in 2007.

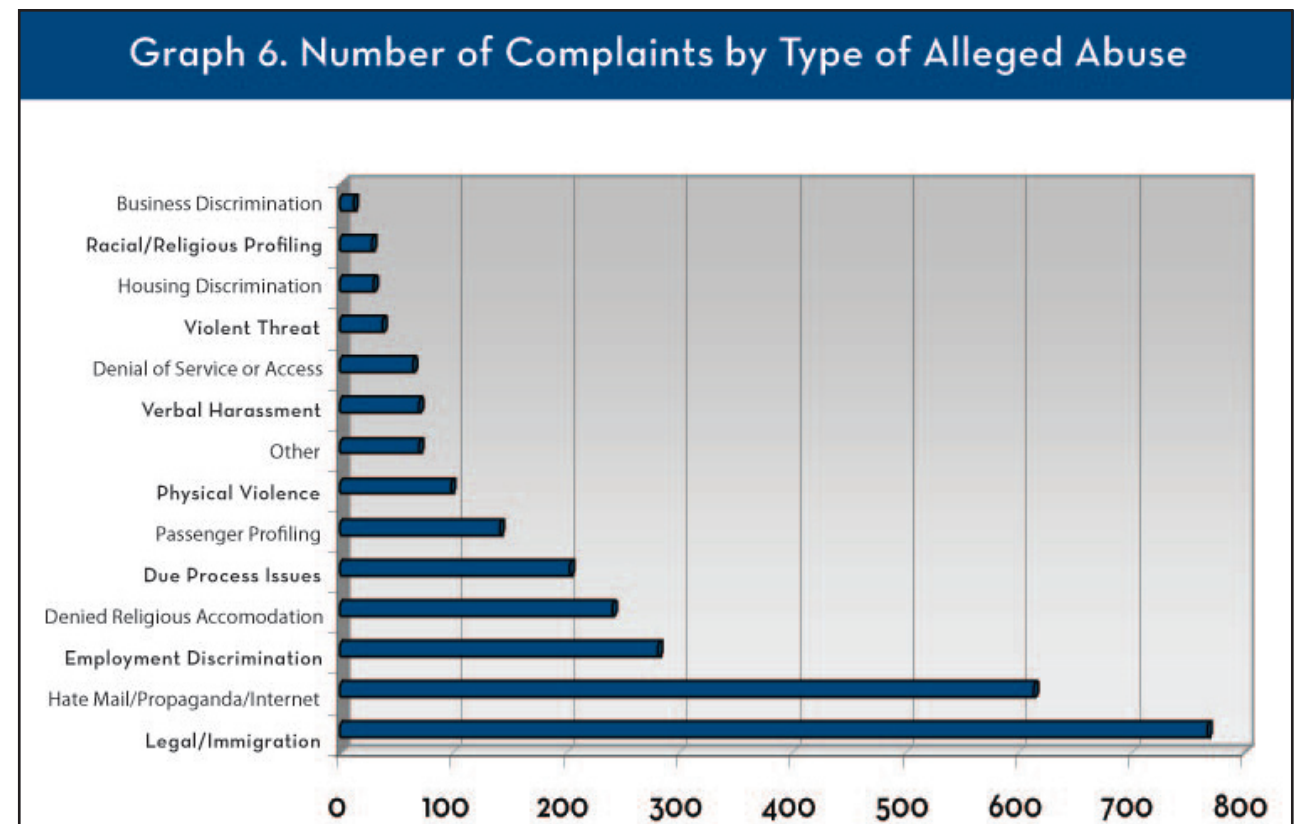


Table 1 Number of Civil Rights Reports by Place of Occurrence

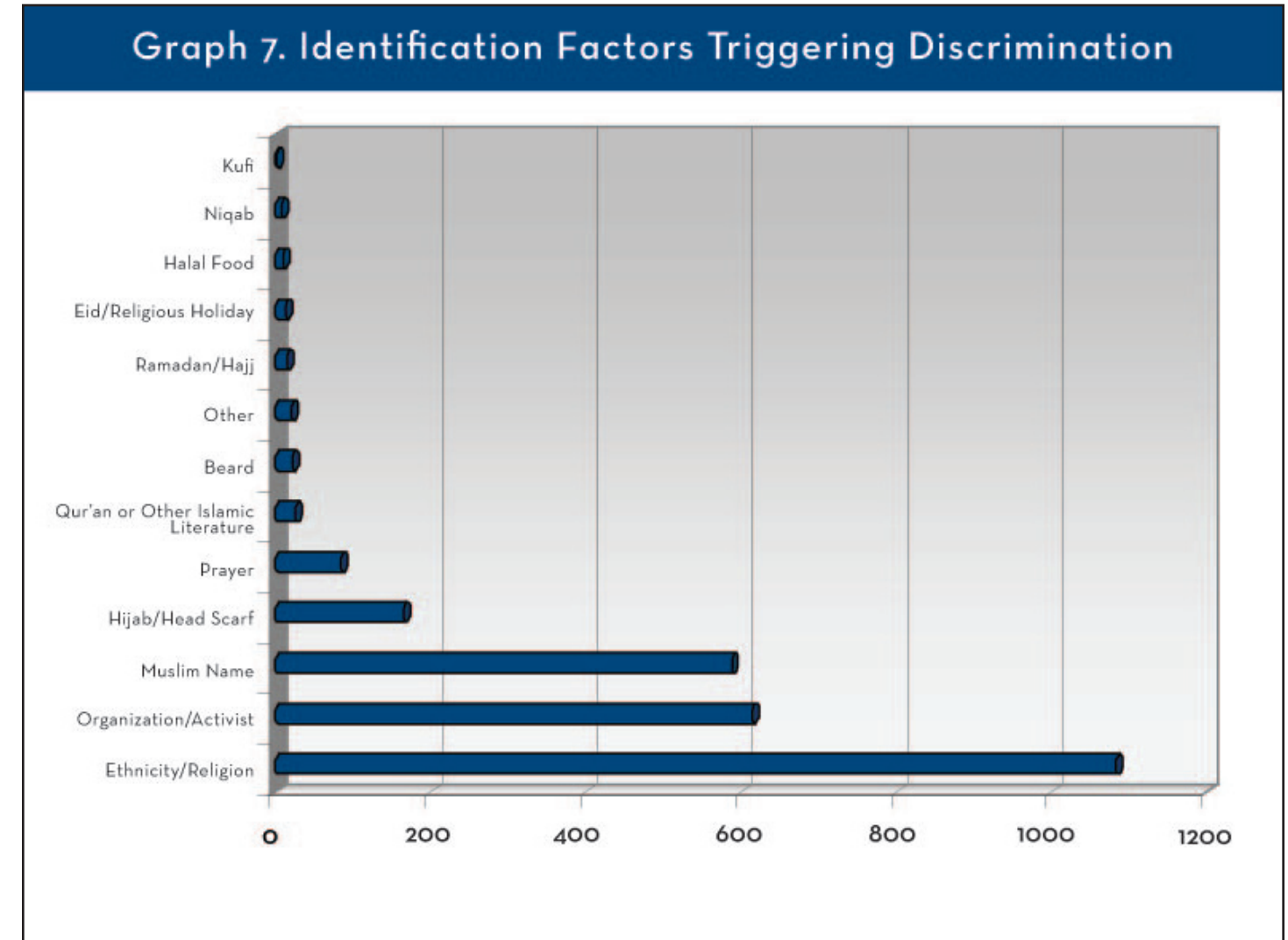
Setting	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Workplace	47	42	48	26	23	23	18.27	25.41	15.57	17.04
Government Agency	8	11	10	19	23	29	19.25	19.25	36.32	29.94
Police	-	-	-	-	-	4	2.43	3.30	4.30	2.30
Airport	3	3	2	26	14	4	5.78	3.40	3.24	5.09
School	8	13	15	8	7	7	6.24	8.22	6.93	4.45
Public Accommodation	10	8	9	7	6	4	2.69	4.36	1.91	1.96
Muslim Organization/Mosque	2	2	1	3	4	6	2.56	3.80	8.96	21.27
Prison	17	13	9	3	6	6	7.69	8.87	5.15	4.90
Internet/Email/Mail/Phone	0	0	0	3	6	1	3.88	5.83	1.42	0.68
Court	2	3	1	0	3	1	1.97	2.54	1.58	1.81
Military	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.20	0.41	0.08	0.00
Housing	0	0	0	0	4	2	7.56	4.36	3.16	1.24
Shopping Center	0	0	0	0	2	3	2.23	1.27	1.46	1.24
Financial Institution	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.64	0.76	1.38	0.90
Muslim-Owned Business	-	-	-	-	-	4	6.50	1.57	2.27	0.75
Street	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.68	2.69	2.39	1.81
Other	1	3	2	5	1	1	5.32	0.71	1.34	2.94
Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.30	2.55	.94
Private Home/Property	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.40

Islamic Factors that Trigger Discrimination

Consistent with previous years, an individual’s ethnicity/religion or a “Muslim name” remained the primary Islamic factors that triggered discrimination. These two factors are linked to **63 percent of the total** cases reported to CAIR during the 2007 calendar year.

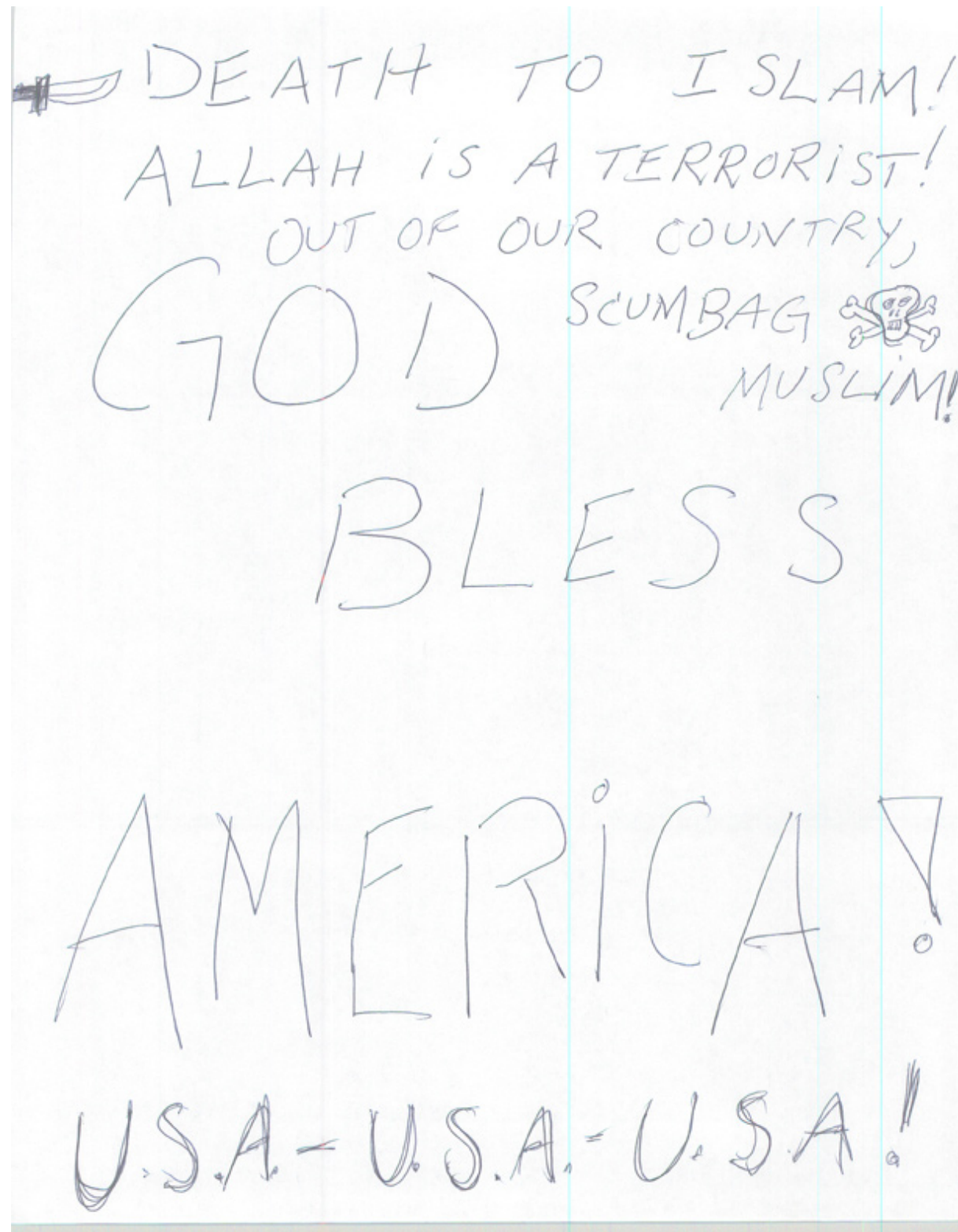
It is important to note that many acts of discrimination occur due to the perceived ethnicity or religion of the victim. Many Sikh Americans, who are neither Muslim nor Arab, have been targets of anti-Muslim bias as a result of their appearance.

TABLE 6: Identification Factors Triggering Discrimination		
FEATURE TRIGGER	CASE COUNT	PERCENT TOTAL
Ethnicity/Religion	1083	40.84%
Organization/Activist	614	23.15%
Muslim Name	588	22.17%
Hijab/Head Scarf	165	6.22%
Prayer	85	3.21%
Qur’an or Other Islamic Literature	26	0.98%
Beard	22	0.83%
Other	21	0.79%
Ramadan/Hajj	15	0.57%
Eid/Religious Holiday	13	0.49%
Halal Food	10	0.38%
Niqab	8	0.30%
Kufi	2	0.08%



Out of 2,652 complaints received by CAIR in 2007, 63 percent were triggered by the person’s ethnicity/religion or because the person had a “Muslim-sounding” name.

Sample Cases from 2007 CAIR Civil Rights Database



Hate Crimes

January 17, 2007 - An attack on a Muslim took place outside a Lackawanna, NY, restaurant. The victim, a 26-year-old man of Yemeni heritage, said one of the white male assailants called him a “f**king Arab” as the attack began. Another attacker allegedly picked the victim up from behind and threw him to the ground, rendering him unconscious. The victim suffered a fractured nose and a fracture under one eye. His medical treatment included staples on the back of his head and six stitches on his face.

February 1, 2007 - Threatening letters mailed to Muslim leaders targeted the imams of at least two New Jersey mosques. One of the letters stated in part: “Because you worship the devil ALLAH, who has brought death, destruction, and hatred upon my country, you must now DIE!! DEATH TO ALL OF YOU!!!” The same mosque also received a phone call expressing similar views near the time the threatening letter was received.

May 1, 2007 - The Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI) received a letter threatening Muslims in the Detroit area. The letter, which contained violent pro-Israel and Islamophobic rhetoric and imagery, stated in part: “Our goal is to terminate all Muslims (sic) in the greater Detroit area. . .and we will kill you first!” CAIR-MI Executive Director Dawud Walid reported the threat to the FBI.

May 17, 2007 - An alleged assault on a Muslim woman took place in Fairview, NJ by a man shouting Islamophobic slurs. The assailant reportedly shouted, “You (expletive) Muslims are here to bomb this country, you should all die. I want to kill all of you Muslims.”

June 25, 2007 - A Muslim man was allegedly attacked while leaving a St. Cloud, MN mosque. The 26-year-old victim was called a “Muslim terrorist” and then shoved and elbowed in the head by the perpetrator. Police called the attack a bias-motivated crime.¹³

July 12, 2007 - An arson attack on a Sarasota, FL Muslim family’s home was investigated by the FBI. “F*** Islam” was spray-painted on the garage door of the house, which is owned by a Muslim of Bosnian heritage. Neighbors told a local television station that “it sounded like a bomb exploded inside the house.” The station also reported that “there were 10 different spots inside the home where accelerants were used.” Fire officials told police that the blaze was an act of arson.¹⁴

July 26, 2007 - A mother and her children were eating at a Taco Bell in Lynn Haven, FL when a man began to scream religious slurs such as “you Muslim bast**ds.” The assailant then reportedly spit food on a five-year-old child and shoved his 11-year-old brother. When the mother asked why the man was acting in such an abusive manner, he allegedly replied: “My problem is that you are f**king Muslims.” The alleged assailant, who was at the time a Bay County school bus driver, was eventually arrested and charged with two counts of evidencing prejudice while committing an offense.¹⁵

¹³ “Man is charged with assault allegedly attacked man after prayer,” Associated Press, June 26, 2007.

¹⁴ Latisha R. Gray, “Islamic activists want FBI to look into arson and vandalism of Sarasota County home,” The Herald Tribune, July 14, 2007.

¹⁵ Donna Vavala, “School bus driver fired after alleged hate crime,” Emerald Coast Community News, July 26, 2007.

August 8, 2007 - An “acid bomb” was thrown out of a car window near worshippers outside an Arizona mosque. A container of acid and a reactant landed near an imam and another mosque official who were standing outside the Albanian American Islamic Center of Arizona. The plastic bottle landed within 20-25 feet of the apparent targets, who reported a chemical smell after the container exploded. No one was injured in the attack.¹⁶

August 15, 2007 - A Muslim shopper of North African heritage alleged he was the victim of verbal abuse, threats and battery by another customer. During the incident, the assailant allegedly shouted “Go back to your country,” “terrorist,” and other anti-Muslim and racist slurs. The victim also alleges that security officers of the Prime Outlet Mall in Orlando, FL refused to come to his aid and kept witnesses from making statements to police. The victim also alleges that local police refused to arrest the assailant.¹⁷

September 16, 2007 - A New York Iranian-American salon owner was opening her shop when she was brutally beaten by two men. The perpetrators reportedly slammed her head on the counter, shoved a towel in her mouth, smashed her hand with a hammer, and slashed her face, chest, and back with a knife and box cutters. The men called her “terrorist” and scrawled anti-Muslim messages on a mirror on her shop.¹⁸

October 2, 2007 - WLW-AM host Bill “Willie” Cunningham said on air: “The great war of this generation’s time is the war against Islamic fascists. . .They do not live for life, they live for death. Only through death can they believe they can be with those 72 virgins in heaven and have sex with children for eternity, which is the goal of that religion.” CAIR called on WLW-AM to reprimand Bill Cunningham for his “outrageous and inflammatory” remarks.¹⁹

October 8, 2007 - An attack on the Islamic Center of San Joaquin Valley in Bakersfield, CA left windows broken, cars smashed, and two worshippers injured. It was reported that two inebriated men entered the women’s section of the mosque and disrupted the services taking place for Ramadan. Slurs such as “Arab terrorists” and “go home terrorists” were allegedly used by the perpetrators. They returned that night with a dozen people who verbally assaulted and threw rocks at the people leaving the mosque.²⁰

Mosque Vandalism

January 22, 2007 - At the Islamic Center of America in Detroit, MI, vandals spray-painted “(RAH) You idol worship” and “Go home 911 murderers,” across an entire wall of the building. The graffiti was reported to CAIR-MI by a passing motorist.²¹

April 6, 2007 - A defaced Quran was found on the steps of the Islamic Center of Clarksville in Clarksville, TN two hours before Friday services. The vandal had written “Mohammad pedophile” on the cover and expletives on the inside. It was also smeared with two strips of bacon. The police contacted the FBI about the case.²²

¹⁶ The Washington Times, Around the Nation, “Arizona,” August 9, 2007.
¹⁷ WFTV, “Muslim Man Says He Was Called ‘Terrorist’ At Orlando Mall,” August 16, 2007. <http://www.wftv.com/news/13909377/detail.html>
¹⁸ James Fanelli, “Muslim Biz Gal Beaten,” New York Post, September 16, 2007.
¹⁹ Brian Maloney, “The Big Cave-in,” The Radio Equalizer, October 29, 2007.
²⁰ Associated Press, “FBI investigating Bakersfield mosque attack as hate crime,” October 10, 2007.
²¹ Niraj Warikoo, “Detroit Mosque Vandalized (Michigan),” Detroit Free Press, Jan 23, 2007
²² Matt Rennels, “FBI on case of Quran defacing,” The Leaf-Chronicle (Clarksville, Tennessee),

May 15, 2007 - Vandals broke into a mosque in Brentwood, NY and scrawled hateful messages such as “white power” “don’t bother calling 911” and swastikas on the walls and doors. Nothing was stolen. The Suffolk Police Hate Crime Unit investigated the incident.

August 12, 2007 - The Islamic Center of the East Bay in Antioch, CA was set on fire in an arson attack only seven months after shots had been fired at the center. This was the sixth malicious incident that has occurred at the center. There was an estimated \$200,000 in damage to the building. Mosque officials said there was also a break-in at the center several days previously. The police did not find any evidence of a hate crime, but were investigating the matter.²³

September 14, 2007 - Bullets were fired through the doorway of the Islamic Center of South Texas. The shots were fired on a Friday afternoon during the month of Ramadan. The police did not determine whether the incident was a hate crime, but the FBI offered a \$10,000 reward for information.²⁴

Discrimination/Harassment in Schools

February 21, 2007 - A Muslim parent in Raleigh, NC reported that a ninth-grade social sciences teacher had invited a guest speaker from a local Christian missionary group who handed out anti-Islam literature to the class. The materials included a pamphlet called “Jesus Not Muhammad,” that labeled the Prophet Muhammad “a criminal,” “demon possessed,” and “inspired by satan.” Another document was titled “Do Not Marry a Muslim Man.” It stated: “His [Muhammad’s] militant commands and pagan beliefs are contained in the Koran, the book of Islam. The Koran is the book of Islam that Muhammad claimed was revealed to him by Allah, the moon god of Arabs.”²⁵

June 19, 2007 - A 13-year-old Muslim student taking part in a summer algebra program at Seaside High School in Seaside, CA was shouted at by a supervisor in front of more than 100 other students to remove her scarf, despite being told that it was worn for religious reasons. The supervisor screamed, “You have to take it off now,” while the girl broke down in tears. Despite the shouted demands of the school official, the girl refused to remove her scarf.²⁶

July 2007 - A fourth grader of Yemeni descent was allegedly bound and locked in a closet by two Brooklyn classmates for eight minutes before a substitute teacher intervened. The girls hurled “racial and ethnic slurs to the effect -‘go back to your country, we don’t want you here.’”²⁷

September 20, 2007 - At the Toledo Islamic Academy in Toledo, OH, vandals broke two school windows and sprayed-painted Nazi swastikas on doors, windows, trees, and a vehicle at the facility. “White power” was also sprayed on a vehicle.²⁸

²³ Henry K. Lee & Marisa Lagos, “Muslim leaders call Antioch mosque fire ‘act of terror,’” San Francisco Chronicle, August 13, 2007.
²⁴ Associated Press, “Bullet hits door of Corpus Christi mosque,” September 16, 2007.
²⁵ Liza Porteus, “Teen’s Dad Says ‘Anti-Muslim’ Literature handed out in Class Isn’t Freedom of Speech,” Fox News, February 23, 2007. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,253824,00.html>
²⁶ Clarissa Aljentera, “Muslim girl told to remove scarf: Employee offers apology; public statement sought,” The Monterey County Herald, June 22, 2007.
²⁷ John Marzulli, “Arab boy bound & beaten in class, suit says,” Daily News, July 31, 2007.
²⁸ “Tips sought on vandalism at Islamic school,” Toledo Blade (Ohio), October 2, 2007.

September 26, 2007 - Anti-Muslim and racist graffiti was found in the International Affairs Building restroom at Columbia University. The graffiti read: "Attention you pinko Commie motherf****rs and Arab Towelheads: America will wake up one day and nuke Mecca, Medina, Tehran, Baghdad, Jakarta, and all the savages in Africa. You will all be f---ed! America is for White Europeans!"²⁹

Workplace Harassment

April 2, 2007 - A 66-year-old Muslim worker reported that fellow employees at a BMW Manufacturing Co. plant in Spartanburg, SC repeatedly made Islamophobic comments such as, "Muslims are no good. They should all be killed," and, "We will f**k up your family, we'll kill you all." Other comments allegedly disparaged Islamic attire and suggested that Muslim women be raped. One of the abusive co-workers confronted the Muslim worker in a facility restroom on March 31st and put a box-cutter to his throat, saying: "I'll slice your throat and kill you." When the incident was first reported, company officials did not take appropriate action against the assailant. A report has been filed with the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office (case number 2007040040).³⁰

April 2, 2007 - Two workers were fired and three others quit in protest at the Gold'n Plump Poultry plant in Arcadia, WI. The workers' dispute centered on a "floating break" during which they prayed their break-of-dawn (fajr) prayer, one of five daily Islamic prayers. The company had accommodated the prayers with a floating break for several months, but issued a new policy that forced the workers to choose between their religious practices and their jobs. While the prayers took place, the Muslim workers had employees of other faiths fill in for them, and when those workers took their breaks, the Muslims kept working to keep the line moving.³¹

Unreasonable Arrest/Detention

December 30, 2006 - Sixty-two-year-old Majed Shehadeh was held and interrogated for more than 12 hours by officials with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the FBI after arriving at Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport. He was allegedly placed in a cold cell with some 25 other people and a single toilet, and prevented from taking prescribed heart medication for 20 hours. Shehadeh, whose wife and three children are U.S. citizens, had planned to visit his daughter in Bakersfield, CA to celebrate her passing the California Bar exam and her wedding anniversary. CBP officials reported that he would be sent out of the country that Sunday.³²

February 15, 2007 - In 2005, a Florida jury rejected federal charges that Dr. Sami Al-Arian, a former University of South Florida professor, operated a cell for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Al-Arian later pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was scheduled for release and deportation that April. He began a hunger strike after being given a sentence of up to 18 months for refusing to testify before a grand jury in Virginia, despite his attorneys saying his earlier plea agreement freed him from further cooperation with the government. The American Muslim Taskforce on Civil Rights and Elections (AMT), a national coalition of major American Muslim organizations, said the new prison sentence given to Al-Arian amounted to unconstitutional "double jeopardy."

²⁹ Columbia Spectator, "Racist Graffiti Found on Bathroom Stall in SIPA," September 27, 2007.
³⁰ The State, "Muslim BMW worker says he was threatened," The State (Columbia, South Carolina), April 5, 2007.
³¹ Oskar Garcia, "70 Somalis who quit jobs over prayer time return to work," Associated Press, May 26, 2007.
³² Garance Burke, "German Muslim Held, Denied U.S. Entry," Associated Press, January 2, 2007.

November 29, 2007 - A Minnesota Muslim reportedly was detained by two U.S. Immigration and Customs officials and harassed by their supervisor as she re-entered the U.S. after a 10-day trip to a conference in Istanbul, Turkey. She reported that as she passed through the customs area, she was questioned about her heritage, including questions about her parents' place of birth. The supervisor also asked if any items in her carry-on luggage had religious significance. "This line of questioning creates the perception of racial and religious profiling," said CAIR-MN Executive Director Omar Merhi. "Questions about the birthplace of an American citizen's parents insinuate that due to one's heritage, he or she might be a person worthy of suspicion." After her luggage was searched, and without answering the questions pertaining to her parents, she was finally cleared to enter the country.

Discrimination

January 17, 2007 - Forty American Muslim pilgrims say they were denied boarding on a Northwest Airlines flight from Germany to Detroit while returning from the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Northwest Airlines said the Muslim travelers arrived too late to make the connecting flight. That claim was refuted by the pilgrims, who said they arrived at the gate with time to spare and that they were mistreated by airline representatives. An official of Northwest Airlines told CAIR that the Muslim travelers would receive an apology for the inconvenience they suffered and would be compensated for any extra flight or hotel costs they incurred.³³

July 1, 2007 - A British Muslim citizen, 57-year-old Rashid Ahmed Esakjee, was barred from entering the United States and sent back to the United Kingdom less than 24 hours after his arrival. Initially, all five members of Esakjee's family were detained after arriving at the Los Angeles International Airport on the evening of June 28. The family members, except for Esakjee, were later released. Esakjee had previously traveled several times to the U.S. without any problems and was visiting his daughter in the U.S. to meet his new grandson. The British Embassy confirmed to CAIR-LA that no action on its part led to Esakjee's detention or denial of entry to the United States.

May 5, 2007 - In Quebec, Canada, the International Football Association Board (FIFA) members backed a referee's controversial decision to prevent an 11-year-old girl from taking part in a soccer match while wearing hijab. Her team, and others in the tournament, walked out in protest. While the board backed the referee's decision, it stopped short of issuing a clear ruling on the issue of Muslim players wearing hijab. The Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) announced in November of 2007 that it would allow players to wear "sports" versions of the Islamic headscarf, or hijab, during soccer games.³⁴

June 28, 2007 - A Georgia Muslim seeking to contest a speeding ticket was allegedly barred from a courtroom in that state because she wears an Islamic headscarf, or hijab. According to the woman, security officers barred her entry despite being told that she wears the scarf for religious reasons and after she offered to let a female officer perform a body search. One of the officers allegedly stated that the denial of entry to the courtroom was due to "homeland security" and that allowing her to enter would show "disrespect" to the judge. After being told that she would be unable

³³ Niraj Warikoo, "Muslims say they will shun Northwest Airlines," Detroit Free Press, January 17, 2007.
³⁴ CBC News, "Ontario, Quebec differ over soccer head scarf ban," February 26, 2007.

to enter the court at any future date while wearing her scarf, the Muslim woman felt compelled to agree to a plea of nolo contendere and was fined \$168. Through the clerk of court, the judge communicated an apology for the denial of entry, but was quoted as saying that “we have rules that everyone has to follow.”³⁵

July 12, 2007 – Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) employees insisted that two Muslim women remove their headscarves for their driver’s license photographs despite regulations stipulating an exemption for religious head coverings. Later, the two women were allowed to have driver’s license photographs retaken with their headscarves.³⁶

August 3, 2007 – A three-year-old Muslim child who had been denied entry to the U.S. since birth was re-united with his parents in Virginia. It is suspected that the denial may have been related to the child’s name, “Ahmedyassine,” which is similar to that of a Palestinian leader assassinated by Israel. The child had been living with an aunt in Morocco while the immigration approval process was stalled. Soon after being contacted by CAIR-MD/VA in June, immigration authorities said the child could join his family in Virginia.³⁷

August 28, 2007 – Bilal Mahmud, a US citizen and Vietnam war veteran, claimed that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mistakenly labeled him a threat to national security and revoked his commercial hazardous driver’s license, thereby destroying his career. The DHS has since acknowledged its mistake, saying it had made an error in classifying Mahmud as a threat to national security. Before losing his commercial hazardous driver’s license, Mahmud was an employee of Old Dominion Freight Line for 20 years, during which time he was never disciplined or reprimanded in any manner. On June 19, 2007, the federal court dismissed the lawsuit Mahmud had filed, holding that the law did not provide any remedy for damages as a result of the action taken by the DHS.³⁸

October 29, 2007 – Michael Savage screamed attacks targeting Muslims, Islam and the Quran during “The Savage Nation,” his nationally-syndicated radio program that airs on more than 300 radio stations nationwide. Savage’s shouted anti-Muslim attacks included: “I’m not gonna put my wife in a hijab. And I’m not gonna put my daughter in a burqa. And I’m not gettin on my all-fours and praying to Mecca. And you could drop dead if you don’t like it. You can shove it up your pipe. I don’t wanna hear anymore about Islam. I don’t wanna hear one more word about Islam. Take your religion and shove it up your behind. I’m sick of you...They need deportation. I don’t need reeducation. Deportation, not reeducation...Without due process. You can take your due process and shove it...Make no mistake about it, the Quran is not a document of freedom. The Quran is a document of slavery and chattel. It teaches you that you are a slave.”³⁹

Special Section: Anti-Muslim Remarks and Acts on the Presidential Campaign Trail in 2007

The early stages of the 2008 presidential campaign brought a number of anti-Muslim remarks and acts.

35 Valdosta Daily Times, “Muslim woman barred from Georgia courtroom for wearing scarf,” July 1, 2007.
 36 The Washington Times, Religion Briefs, “Muslim scarves OK’d for license photos,” July 21, 2007.
 37 Associated Press, “Moroccan tot reunited with family in the U.S.,” August 7, 2007.
 38 Shaun Waterman, United Press International, “Court orders mediation in watch-list case,” August 24, 2007.
 39 Jacques Steinberg, “Boycotted Radio Host Remains Unbowed,” The New York Times, December 17, 2007.

In August, Republican presidential candidate Tom Tancredo defended his earlier comment that an attack on Muslim holy sites in Mecca and Medina is an appropriate response to a terrorist attack.⁴⁰

In October, Senator John McCain stated that he would prefer a Christian president and that the Constitution established America as a “Christian nation.”⁴¹ To his credit, McCain also said, “I admire the [sic] Islam” during the interview. He later contacted the source of the story and clarified his position saying, “I would vote for a Muslim if he or she was the candidate best able to lead the country and defend our political values.”

Another, Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, released a campaign ad⁴² in Iowa entitled “Jihad,” in which he vowed to fight terrorists and confront Iran. CAIR released a statement criticizing Romney’s use of the term “jihad” and for buying into the extremists’ perception of the conflict. The release cited a May 23, 2006 National Defense University paper written Dr. Douglas E. Streusand and LTC Harry D. Tunnell which notes the following: “We begin with the word jihad, which literally means striving and generally occurs as part of the expression jihad fi sabil illah, striving in the path of God. Striving in the path of God is a duty of all Muslims. Calling our enemies jihadis and their movement a global jihad thus indicates that we recognize their doctrines and actions as being in the path of God and, for Muslims, legitimate. In short, we explicitly designate ourselves as the enemies of Islam.”

In November, Congressman Tancredo released an ad⁴³ depicting a fictional terrorist attack. The ad uses imagery that seems intended to inspire fear in its viewers at the expense of Muslims. Later in the month, Tancredo said of Europe: “They’ve already become, to a large extent, Islamicized. And that is worrisome.”⁴⁴

Also that month, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney reportedly⁴⁵ said he would decline to appoint an American Muslim to a cabinet position because of their low percentage of the U.S. population: “...based on the numbers of American Muslims [as a percentage] in our population, I cannot see that a cabinet position would be justified. But of course, I would imagine that Muslims could serve at lower levels of my administration.”

In December, the Concord Monitor reported⁴⁶ that New Hampshire Veterans for Giuliani co-chair John Deady quit his position following reports that he told The Guardian of London, “[Giuliani]’s got I believe the knowledge and the judgment to attack one of the most difficult problems in current history and that is the rise of the Muslims, and make no mistake about it, this hasn’t happened for a thousand years. These people are very dedicated and they’re also very, very smart in their own way. We need to keep the feet to the fire and keep pressing these people until we defeat or chase them back to their caves or in other words get rid of them.” The Monitor added, “When asked if he was referring to all Muslims, Deady told the paper, ‘I don’t subscribe to the principle that there are good Muslims and bad Muslims.’”

40 CNN Blog, 8/05/2007
<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2007/08/05/tancredo-defends-threat-to-bomb-muslim-holy-sites/>
 41 http://www.beliefnet.com/story/220/story_22001_1.html#extndVer
 42 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOPp9K1JUCs>
 43 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZBjXr5CWUI>
 44 Concord Monitor, 11/18/2007
 45 Christian Science Monitor, 11/27/2007
 46 Concord Monitor, 12/31/2007

Conclusion

“...show forgiveness, speak for justice and avoid the ignorant.”

-The Holy Quran 7:199

The decrease of hate crime reports and reports of discrimination both in schools and by police during 2007 allows us to sound a note of cautious optimism. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, American Muslims have engaged with and educated fellow Americans, at all levels of the society, about Islam and the American Muslim experience. Perhaps this engage-and-educate approach is showing positive results.

Given that incidents of reported discrimination at the workplace stayed level and that the number of reported civil rights complaints increased for the fourth year in a row, there is still work to be done.

According to the Pew Research Center, “A majority of Muslim Americans (53%) say it has become more difficult to be a Muslim in the U.S. since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Most also believe that the government ‘singles out’ Muslims for increased surveillance and monitoring.”⁴⁷ A USA Today/Gallup Poll published in 2006 reports, “Nearly one quarter of Americans, 22%, say they would not like to have a Muslim as a neighbor” and “Nearly four in ten Americans (39%) say they do feel some prejudice” toward Muslims.⁴⁸

At the same time, polling data inspires optimism. Pew reports: “Overall, Muslim Americans have a generally positive view of the larger society. Most say their communities are excellent or good places to live.” USA Today/Gallup notes, “Personally knowing someone who is Muslim -- which 41% of Americans say they do -- corresponds with more favorable attitudes...” CAIR’s 2007 survey of registered American Muslim voters found that “87% said they vote regularly...and 45% had recently volunteered for an institution that serves the general public (not a religious institution).”⁴⁹

The Muslim community now has well-established organizations to advocate on its behalf. These institutions serve both to educate our fellow Americans about our faith and to educate our fellow Muslims in effective methods for redressing grievances through political, media and social activism. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has a track record of assisting Muslims and others who have been subjected to discrimination. After the Danish cartoon controversy and allegations of Quran desecration at Guantanamo Bay, CAIR initiated educational campaigns as a pro-active, constructive response. This is an approach that people of all faiths can appreciate, as it helps promote respect and religious tolerance. CAIR staff train Muslims nationwide in media engagement and participation in the political process.

The organization’s practice of engagement, while defending the community’s rights, is what led Pastor Warren Clark of Tampa, FL to write, “As a Christian pastor, I support of the work of CAIR, Council on American Islamic Relations. This is a national group with a very balanced and effective voice that speaks up for the rights of all peoples, and especially Muslims in the United States.”⁵⁰ Echoing this, an editorial in the New Jersey Star Ledger said, “The FBI and other agencies have repeatedly used CAIR to build bridges with the Muslim community.”⁵¹ The East Valley Tribune reported, “... (T)he Council on American-Islamic Relations has emerged as a vigilant force against discrimination against Muslims.”⁵²

Some government agencies appear to be benefiting from an emphasis on cultural proficiency for employees who interact with Muslims. In December 2006, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that it had provided special training about Islamic traditions related to the Hajj to some 45,000 airport security officers in advance of the pilgrimage season that occurred in early 2007. Many Muslims returning from the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca bring large quantities of holy water. Knowledge of this and other aspects of the Hajj can help foster a hassle-free process for returning pilgrims.

⁴⁷ “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” Pew Research Center, 5/22/2007
⁴⁸ “Anti-Muslim Sentiments Fairly Commonplace,” Gallup News Service, 8/10/2006.
⁴⁹ American Muslim Voter Survey 2008, Council on American-Islamic Relations.

⁴⁷ Source: St. Petersburg Times, 3/19/2007
⁴⁸ New Jersey Star Ledger Editorial, 3/16/2007.
⁴⁹ Source: East Valley Tribune, 1/19/08.

CAIR Recommendations

“It may well be that God will bring about love (and friendship) between you and those with whom you are now at odds.”

-Quran, 60:7

1. *Elected representatives, public officials, and candidates for elected office should clearly condemn anti-Islam bias. Elected officials should also ensure that their respective parties similarly condemn such bias. Political strategists should avoid exploiting Islamophobic fears to gain votes.*

In 2008, CAIR applauded Republican presidential nominee John McCain’s decision to reject Ohio pastor Rod Parsley’s endorsement of his presidential bid.

Parsley, pastor of the World Harvest Church of Columbus, Ohio, has referred to Islam as an “anti-Christ religion” and has expressed support for “seeing this false religion [Islam] destroyed.” He also described Islam’s prophet Mohammed as “the mouthpiece of a conspiracy of spiritual evil.” McCain had previously praised Parsley, saying he is “one of the truly great leaders in America, a moral compass, a spiritual guide.”

Referring to Parsley’s anti-Muslim diatribes, McCain said, “I believe there is no place for that kind of dialogue in America, and I believe that even though he endorsed me, and I didn’t endorse him, the fact is that I repudiate such talk, and I reject his endorsement.”

Similarly, CAIR welcomed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama’s decision to personally call and apologize to two Muslim women who were barred from sitting behind him at a Michigan rally. Media reports indicated the women were kept from the podium area because campaign volunteers did not want the candidate associated with the women’s Islamic scarves, or hijabs. Campaign officials later apologized to the women.

2. *Muslims and their institutions should continue to respond to negative incidents with positive educational campaigns.*

In 2006, CAIR reported, “America’s Muslims...are being praised in the media for their ‘tolerance’ and ‘deft diplomacy’ in responding to the publication of cartoons that insult the Prophet Muhammad. Building on our ‘Explore the Quran’ campaign success, CAIR launched a program to bring balanced information about Muhammad to America’s through a free book or DVD.”

Incidents of discrimination, profiling or bias should be reported to CAIR and the appropriate authorities. Experience shows that once this is done, negative experiences should be turned into teaching opportunities that will help prevent future incidents.

3. *Muslim groups should continue to maintain regular contact with law enforcement agencies at the national, state and local levels.*

Community policing, a relationship of community members and law enforcement as partners rather than mutually-suspicious adversaries, in controlling crime and security is recommended.

4. *Legislation banning racial, religious or ethnic profiling should be passed*

American Muslims and other people of conscience should advocate for legislation clearly prohibiting discriminatory practices like racial and religious profiling. If clear policies are created and fair treatment is institutionalized through legislation, the community would hopefully experience less discrimination due to the criminal implications of discriminatory practices.

In his 2001 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush stated “[Racial profiling is] wrong, and we will end it in America. In so doing, we will not hinder the work of our nation’s brave police officers. They protect us every day -- often at great risk. But by stopping the abuses of a few, we will add to the public confidence our police officers earn and deserve.”

In a 2003 advisory report, the Department of Justice stated that “racial profiling in law enforcement is not merely wrong, but also ineffective. Race-based assumptions in law enforcement perpetuate negative racial stereotypes that are harmful to our rich and diverse democracy, and materially impair our efforts to maintain a fair and just society.”

Glossary of Islamic Terms

Allah	The most commonly used linguistic term for “God” in Arabic. The term translates as “The One” and has no plural. Allah is the same monotheistic God of Abraham worshipped by Christians and Jews.
Beard	Many devout Muslim men grow beards in observance of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. This tradition frequently involves allowing the bearding to grow long while keeping the moustache trimmed short.
Eid	An Islamic holiday. There are two Eid celebrations each year. Eid al-Fitr is the holiday celebrating the end of the month of Ramadan. Eid al-Adha, the most important Islamic holiday, commemorates the end of Hajj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia every year.
Hajj	A pilgrimage to Mecca is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for Muslims who are physically and financially able to undertake the journey. The rituals of Hajj commemorate the sacrifices of Prophet Abraham, his son Prophet Ishmael and his wife Hagar.
Halal	Permissible by Islamic law.
Hijab	Modest clothing that many Muslim women choose to wear in public. Generally, it is loose-fitting clothes and includes a head covering.
Imam	A prayer leader. Since Islam has no hierarchical authority or priesthood, a learned and respected Muslim chosen by each congregation leads the prayers.
Kufi	A cap worn by some Muslim men.
Masjid	The Arabic word for “mosque” - an Islamic house of worship. Plural: masaajid.
Niqab	A face veil.
Prayer	Muslims are commanded to perform five prayers each day at predetermined intervals. Muslims believe their prayers are a direct link with God. During the month of Ramadan, many devout Muslims also observe extended evening prayers.
Quran	Islam’s revealed text. It is considered by Muslims to be the final and unchanged word of God.
Ramadan	Every year in the Islamic lunar month of Ramadan, Muslims who are physically able are commanded by God to fast from the break of dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink and other sensual pleasures.

Appendix

CAIR 2007 Year in Review

CAIR Welcomes ‘Preliminary Victory’ in Imams’ Suit Against Airline

CAIR welcomed a ruling today by a federal judge in Minnesota that rejected almost all of the arguments made by U.S. Airways and the Metropolitan Airports Commission in the case of six imams, or Islamic religious leaders, removed from a 2006 flight in Minneapolis, then arrested and denied further service. In her 41-page ruling and order, U.S. District Judge Montgomery stated that the allegations that the imams were intent on interfering with the flight were “dubious.” Montgomery added that the plaintiffs did have a plausible claim that their constitutional rights were violated. An attorney in the case, Omar Mohammedi, stated: “This preliminary victory shows that any American can have a day in court. Our judicial system has always been, and will remain, the hope for all minorities who seek to redress civil rights violations.”

“Beyond Stereotypes” Campaign Seeks to Combat Media Bias

To help combat media bias, CAIR launched the “Beyond Stereotypes” campaign in November 2007. The campaign was designed to help enhance understanding of Islam and Muslims in the news media. The centerpiece of the campaign was the planned distribution of the booklet “American Muslims: A Journalist’s Guide to Understanding Islam and Muslims” to some 40,000 media professionals nationwide. CAIR’s new guide offers journalists the tools needed to gain a better understanding of Islam and write more accurate and balanced stories about Muslims. In challenging common misconceptions about Islam and Muslims, the guide provides an Islamic perspective on hot-button issues such as Islam and democracy, freedom of religion, women’s rights, and interfaith relations. CAIR also offered a series of media relations training and access to an interactive website equipped with tools to better assist individuals.

CAIR and Hate Hurts America vs. Michael Savage

On April 17, 2007, nationally syndicated radio host Michael Savage called for “kill[ing] 100 million” Muslims. On his radio show, Savage told listeners that “intelligent people, wealthy people ... are very depressed by the weakness that America is showing to these psychotics in the Muslim world. They say, ‘Oh, there’s a billion of them.’ “ Savage continued: “I said, ‘So, kill 100 million of them, then there’d be 900 million of them.’ I mean ... would you rather us die than them?” He added: “Would you rather we disappear or we die? Or would you rather they disappear and they die? Because you’re going to have to make that choice sooner rather than later.” As a result of Savage’s rhetorical attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, the interfaith coalition Hate Hurts America (HHA) was formed. CAIR joined the coalition, which seeks to challenge hate speech on talk radio, to urge advertisers to stop airing commercials on Savage’s nationally syndicated show “The Savage Nation.” Due to the joint efforts of CAIR and HHA, a number of advertisers have refused or stopped airing

their commercials during Savage’s radio show. Some of the advertisers include Choice Hotels International, Sam’s Club, ITT Technical Institute, Chattem, Inc. (owners of Gold Bond, Icy Hot, and Selsun Blue), Union Bank of California, Intuit (parent company of TurboTax and QuickBooks), GEICO Insurance, US Cellular, Sprint Nextel, Sears, Universal Orlando Resorts, AutoZone, Citrix, TrustedID, JCPenney, OfficeMax, Wal-Mart, and AT&T.

CAIR Joins Challenge of Los Angeles Police Department’s “Muslim Mapping” Initiative

In November 2007, CAIR joined with other civil liberties groups and Islamic institutions opposing a controversial project proposed by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to “map” Muslim communities in Southern California. The plan sought to map out Muslims according to factors such as which websites they visited, what mosques they attended, which Islamic schools of thought they followed, who they interacted with and their income levels. Police Chief William Bratton defended the LAPD idea by stating in the *Los Angeles Times* that the mapping initiative strived to better understand Muslim communities and did not constitute as racial profiling. CAIR, along with the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, Muslim Advocates and the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, sent a letter to the LAPD expressing concerns over possible civil rights violations if “mapping” of Muslims were to move forward. CAIR and other organizations were able to successfully raise awareness on the issue through both local and national media outlets. As a result, the LAPD canceled its ill-advised “mapping” program and pledged to reach out to and work with the Muslim community, subsequently forming a Muslim Community Forum.

CAIR Tackles Islamophobia

In an effort to counter the growing negative view of Muslim Americans and Islam, on July 2008, CAIR announced a nationwide campaign against Islamophobia, or fear of Islam and its followers. CAIR kicked off its campaign in Dallas, Texas with a panel discussion titled, “Do U.S. Policies Fuel Islamophobia?” The campaign continued with a discussion on Peter Gottschalk and Daniel Greenberg’s book “Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy,” in Washington D.C., and a panel discussion on “Islamophobia: Institutionalized Racism” in New York.

CAIR Goes to Hollywood

In an effort to promote a positive change in Hollywood’s portrayal of Muslims and Arabs, CAIR and FOX Television co-hosted a “Hollywood 101” workshop and studio tour at FOX Studios in Century City. The workshop provided aspiring Muslim actors, writers, and directors exposure to the entertainment industry. Individuals taking part in the event included students and entry-level professionals hoping to build contacts in the industry and seek tips on advancing their careers.

Citizenship Delays

In the period from January 2007 until June 2008, CAIR conducted more than 160 meetings with congressional offices to discuss the problem of citizenship delays, in which a person’s application for citizenship has been on hold for months, maybe years. The citizenship delay problem is not merely a matter of some individuals being inconvenienced. Leaving people in a legal limbo for years is a sad return for the immigrant’s patriotism and belief in America’s democratic values. CAIR’s educational efforts, along with those of a number of other groups interested in ensuring that those who followed the rules in the application process were not left in a legal limbo, resulted in congressional pressure on the U.S. Customs and Immigrations Service and the FBI. CAIR also pursues a legal strategy to resolve citizenship delays.

Islamophobia and Anti-Americanism Reinforce Each Other By Mohamed Nimer (7/02/2007)

[Mohamed Nimer is research director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and author of the forthcoming edited volume “Islamophobia and Anti-Americanism: Causes and Remedies.” He may be contacted at: mnimer@cair.com]

When we look at the twin phenomena of Islamophobia and anti-Americanism, we are forced into a kind of “chicken or egg” scenario in which cause and effect remain unclear.

There is a cause and effect correlation between anti-Muslim and anti-American sentiments. As Islamophobia increases, anti-Americanism is strengthened and as hostility to America grows, so does bitterness toward followers of Islam.

For those who seek to promote civilization reconciliation, it is pointless to ask which came first. Instead, we must end the downward spiral of mutual mistrust and begin the process of building bridges of understanding and respect for differences.

Critical study of and comment on Islam or Muslims is not necessarily Islamophobic, just as criticism of American foreign and domestic policies is not always anti-American. It is when these mutual critiques descend to hatred and bigotry that the problem occurs.

Unfortunately, both Islamophobic and anti-American trends are growing. In the U.S., the number of groups and commentators who spew hate against the Islamic faith is multiplying. One group is even calling for prison sentences for “adherence to Islam” in America.

Similarly, Muslim extremists blame America for all of the Islamic world’s problems, even in areas in which America is not a key player. But there is no link between the rise of American power and the sad state of Muslims in many parts of the world. In fact, the general weakness of Muslim-majority countries predated the rise of U.S. influence in global affairs.

Some of the mutual antagonism results from misconceptions on both sides. American media stereotypes of Muslims as billionaires, bombers and belly dancers are matched by popular Muslim stereotypes of Americans as rich, ruthless and raunchy.

Clearly such broad-brush generalizations reinforce misunderstanding and facilitate intolerance. Dialogue between civil society groups in America and Muslim majority states is one way to avoid these misconceptions and improve relations.

Islamophobia and anti-Americanism have often been fueled by real grievances. Every act of terrorism pushes Islamophobes to new extremes, just as American policies that devalue the lives and rights of Muslims leads to more anti-American feelings.

We must somehow communicate to the Muslim world that the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal, the treatment of detainees in Guantanamo Bay and support for authoritarian rulers contradict the American democratic tradition and our nation’s cherished value of self-determination. After all, Americans who believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness should not support denying those goals to others.

On this Fourth of July, Muslims should remind their fellow Americans that Islamic activists in America and across the globe have consistently condemned attacks on civilians – most notably the terror attacks of 9/11.

Hundreds of American Muslim leaders and major Islamic institutions signed on to a fatwa (religious opinion) repudiating terror and religious extremism. Millions of American television viewers have seen the “Not in the Name of Islam” public service announcement decrying the misuse of Islam by terrorism.

Furthermore, Muslim groups continue to maintain regular contacts with law enforcement agencies at the national, state and local levels to help strengthen our national security.

To help reverse the growing trend toward Islamophobia and anti-Americanism, we must address legitimate grievances, whether by calling for stepped up condemnation of terrorism on the part of Muslims, or for justice-based solutions to international conflicts.

Equally important, our government should live up to American ideals in practice. Lofty 4th of July rhetoric must be translated into actions worldwide that show people of all faiths that America is on their side, not against them.

What Would Muhammad Do? - Part 2

By Ibrahim Hooper (11/30/2007)

[Ibrahim Hooper is national communications director for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties group. He may be contacted at: ihooper@cair.com]

During last year's protests over publication of the Danish cartoons designed to insult the Prophet Muhammad, I wrote a commentary called "What Would Muhammad Do?"

Given the ongoing controversy over the jailing of British teacher Gillian Gibbons in the Sudan for "insulting Islam," perhaps it is time to remind us all how the Prophet himself reacted to insults, both real and perceived.

Even if Ms. Gibbons had the intent to cause insult, which does not seem to be the case, Islamic traditions include a number of instances in which the Prophet had the opportunity to retaliate against those who abused him, but refrained from doing so.

"You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

That description of the Prophet Muhammad is a summary of how he reacted to personal attacks and abuse.

Muslims are taught the tradition of the woman who would regularly throw trash on the prophet as he walked down a particular path. The prophet never responded in kind to the woman's abuse. Instead, when she one day failed to attack him, he went to her home to inquire about her condition.

In another tradition, the prophet was offered the opportunity to have God punish the people of a town near Mecca who refused the message of Islam and attacked him with stones. Again, the prophet did not choose to respond in kind to the abuse.

A companion of the prophet noted his forgiving disposition. He said: "I served the prophet for ten years, and he never said 'uf' (a word indicating impatience) to me and never blamed me by saying, 'Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Even when the prophet was in a position of power, he chose the path of kindness and reconciliation.

When he returned to Mecca after years of exile and personal attacks, he did not take revenge on the people of the city, but instead offered a general amnesty.

In the Quran, Islam's revealed text, God states: "When (the righteous) hear vain talk, they withdraw from it saying: 'Our deeds are for us and yours for you; peace be on to you. We do not desire the way of the ignorant'. . . O Prophet (Muhammad), you cannot give guidance to whom you wish, it is God Who gives guidance to whom He pleases, and He is quite aware of those who are guided." (28:55-56)

The Quran also says: "Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance." (16:125)

Another verse tells the prophet to "show forgiveness, speak for justice and avoid the ignorant." (7:199)

These are the examples that Muslims should follow as they express concern at the publication of insulting cartoons or at misperceived actions of a well-meaning teacher.

After the Danish cartoon controversy and allegations of Quran desecration at Guantanamo Bay, CAIR initiated educational campaigns as a peaceful, constructive response. This is an approach that people of all faiths can appreciate, as it helps us move toward respect and religious tolerance.

SEE: <http://cair.com/explorethequran/> and <http://cair.com/muhammad/>

This most recent episode can be used as a learning opportunity for people of all faiths who wish to promote mutual understanding. It can also be viewed as a "teaching moment" for Muslims who want to emulate the Prophet through the example of their good character and dignified behavior.

As the Quran states: "It may well be that God will bring about love (and friendship) between you and those with whom you are now at odds." (60:7)

This week's unfortunate incident in the Sudan points to the need for an increased level of dialogue between ordinary people in the Muslim world and the West.

The complaint brought against Gillian Gibbons was an inappropriate use of Sudan's legal system to deal with what was in essence a disagreement between parents and a teacher. Ms. Gibbons should never have been charged. She should be released immediately.

News Clippings

PalmBeachPost.com

Boca couple reunited after long immigration journey

By Lona O'Connor

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Thursday, November 29, 2007

MIAMI — Pushing a luggage cart, Hafez Almbasher emerged from customs Thursday at Miami International Airport.

"How did they treat you?" he was asked.



A wry smile. Just fine, he answered. He wore the thousand-yard stare of a man who had traveled farther than he ever expected.

After seven months of learning more about the workings of immigration regulations than they ever wanted to know, Hafez and Deborah Almbasher were not too worried about routine re-entry questions. After the hugs and tears subsided, the Boca Raton couple headed for the parking structure.

At her husband's request, Deborah Almbasher is preparing a Thanksgiving dinner today. She had hoped he would have made it home for the official turkey holiday, but he was delayed one more week by a last-minute flurry of bureaucratic paperwork. Today, she says, they have that much more to be thankful for.

In April, Almbasher, 39, an auto body repairman, went to Gaza to visit his mother, who was sick. By June, when he was ready to return home, the Israeli government had closed the border between Gaza and Egypt because the Islamic group Hamas seized the territory.

Almbasher, who is a resident alien in this country, carries a Palestinian passport and his request to return to the United States was denied. With thousands already waiting at the border to leave, American citizens went first.

After that, only hardship cases were being allowed to the head of the line.

Every day for three months, he went to the border to see if he had been cleared. And every day, his wife frantically called and wrote officials, to the point that she knew them by name.

From a combination of stress and long-standing health problems, she was unable to work more than a couple of days a week. Family finances were in dire straits. But her argument that this qualified her husband as a hardship case fell on deaf ears.

In September, she sought help from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an advocacy agency with an office in Pembroke Pines.

Then it was Altaf Ali's turn to swim in red tape. The Council's executive director kept a log for the last two months that contains letters to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the Israeli Consul General, Florida's U.S. Senators and Members of Congress and any other official he thought might be able to intervene on Almbasher's behalf.

By early November, after letters to U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy, (D-Mass.), who heads the Senate immigration subcommittee, and U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings, (D-Miramar), there was reason for optimism.

A Hastings aide called Deborah Almbasher to say that her husband would be allowed to cross from Gaza to the West Bank and Jordan. But by then, his time-sensitive immigration documents had expired and he was turned back by Jordanian authorities.

On Nov. 21, the day before Thanksgiving, Almbasher bought a plane ticket to Florida to assure Israeli and Jordanian officials that he was in transit.

Once in Amman, Almbasher was told by U.S. immigration officials that he had to wait. Six days later, he got the go-ahead - but had to buy himself a second plane ticket home, since the first had expired.

By the time he greeted his wife in Miami, the toughest problem the Almbashers faced was finding their car.

"I would have been scared before," said Deborah Almbasher, beaming at her husband. "Now I know somebody's got my back."

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/south/content/south/epaper/2007/11/29/1129BRHAFEZ.html?cxntid=inform>

Local10.com

3 Men Cleared In Port Scare 'Treated Like Animals'

Men Say They Were Targeted Because Of Ethnicity, Creed

POSTED: 9:51 am EST January 9, 2007

MIAMI -- Three Middle Eastern men who were arrested and later had charges against them dropped over a brief terrorism scare at the Port of Miami on Sunday said they were unfairly targeted because of their ethnicity and creed.

Amar Al-Hadad said he was "humiliated, disrespected (and) treated real badly just because my name is an Arabic name and I'm a Muslim."

The Iraqi-born Al-Hadad cried during the Monday news conference in which he described the way he, his brother, Hussain Al Hadad, and friend, Hassan El Sayed, were treated.

"We were treated like animals," El Sayed said. Officials initially said the men, all permanent U.S. residents, had been caught trying to slip past a checkpoint at the port's entrance.

The truck's contents -- electrical automotive parts in a 40-foot container -- matched the driver's cargo manifest, said Miami-Dade police spokeswoman Nancy Goldberg. A port security officer became suspicious when Amar Al Hadad could not produce proper paperwork in a routine inspection to enter the port at about 8 a.m., Goldberg said. He also indicated he was alone in the truck, though security officers found Hussain Al Hadad and El Sayed in the cab, she said.

But the Dearborn, Mich., men said that was not the way it happened.

"Me and him were sitting right there ... I mean, I was in the passenger seat," Hussain Al-Hadad said. "I must be invisible."

Amar and Hussain Al Hadad were both charged with resisting arrest; Hussain Al Hadad was also charged with trespassing, as was El Sayed, a Lebanese national. A judge dismissed the charges, citing a lack of evidence.

Amar Al-Hadad said his driver's license hadn't been returned and wasn't sure which law enforcement agency had it. The three men were detained by the FBI and released before being charged by the Miami-Dade Police Department.

"We demand the return of those IDs as soon as possible so that they can go about their lives in a normal fashion," said Areeb Naseer, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

The three men said they were considering filing a lawsuit.

Previous Stories:

- January 8, 2007: [3 Men Arrested Trying To Enter Port Of Miami](#)

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News Photographer Damon McGhee

Areeb Naseer, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, says the three men who were cleared of charges in an incident at the Port of Miami are considering filing a lawsuit about the way they were treated.



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