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CAIR Seeks Hate Crime Probe of New Vandalism at Tenn. Mosque Site

Sign marking site of proposed mosque broken in half, was replacement for previously-vandalized sign

WASHINGTON, June 24 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A prominent national Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization today called on local, state and national law enforcement agencies to investigate a new act of vandalism at the site of a proposed Tennessee mosque expansion as a hate crime.

SEE: Sign Vandalized at Future Mosque Site

<http://tinyurl.com/tennmosquesign>

Yesterday, a passing motorist reported that the sign marking the future site of the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro was broken in half. The sign was a replacement for one spray-painted with the words "not welcome" in January of this year.

SEE: Tenn. Muslims React to Vandalism (Video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyEkVgla1r0>

A mosque official told CAIR that the latest incident of vandalism has been reported to local police and the FBI. That same official said local law enforcement authorities have been very supportive of the Muslim community and have stepped up police patrols in the area of the proposed mosque.

The planned expansion of the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro is being opposed by individuals who have made Islamophobic statements at recent public hearings.

SEE: Tenn. Mosque Targeted by Islamophobia (Video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miAWDxkeZnc>

A candlelight vigil for peace, tolerance and freedom of religion is scheduled this evening in Murfreesboro.

SEE: Peace Vigil Scheduled

<http://tinyurl.com/tennpeacevigil>

"Because of the hate-filled and un-American rhetoric used by opponents of the planned mosque expansion, it is essential that a possible bias motive for this latest act of vandalism be investigated," said CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad. "The hostile sentiments expressed in a recent public hearing on the proposed mosque reflect ignorance of the basic tenets of Islam."

He urged people of all faiths to learn about Islam from its original source by requesting a Quran, Islam's revealed text, at the "Explore the Quran" web site.

SEE: Explore the Quran

<http://www.explorethequran.com/>

Awad noted that other efforts nationwide to build mosques or Islamic centers have been similarly targeted by anti-Islam extremists. He attributed the opposition to the mosques to an overall rise in Islamophobic sentiment in American society.

SEE: Hate Groups Promoting Islamophobia in America (Video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0lejW1RstE>

CAIR-MN: Attorney to Hear Anti-Islamic Posters Case

<http://tinyurl.com/anti-islamposters>

Last November, a Tennessee man was sentenced to more than 14 years in prison for burning down the Islamic Center of Columbia, Tenn. Nazi swastikas and the phrase "White Power" were painted on the mosque's walls.

CAIR is urging American Muslim individuals and institutions to review advice on security procedures contained in its "Muslim Community Safety Kit."

SEE: Muslim Community Safety Kit

<http://www.cair.com/ActionCenter/CommunityToolkit.aspx>

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CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.



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