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Chicago Islamic group sues Illinois State Police

August 30, 2010 6:18 PM | [1 Comment](#) | [UPDATED STORY](#)

The Chicago chapter of a national Islamic civil rights group filed a federal discrimination lawsuit today against Illinois State Police on behalf of a local Muslim cleric whose appointment as chaplain was revoked last month.

After making the historic first appointment of an imam to serve as police chaplain, the state police rescinded the offer to Sheikh Kifah Mustapha, associate director of the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview, when questions arose about his connection to a charity with ties to the militant Palestinian group Hamas.

The lawsuit filed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations' Chicago chapter alleges discrimination based on race, religion and national origin. The suit also says Mustapha was denied his First Amendment right to freedom of association, which bars the government from imposing guilt by association. It calls for Mustapha's immediate reinstatement.

"From what we can gather, the reasons given for not accepting Imam Kifah as a chaplain didn't make any sense," said Kevin Vodak, staff attorney for CAIR-Chicago. "There was no specific reason given other than that he failed the background check ... All of the other chaplains that went through the same program were accepted."

Shortly after Mustapha's appointment, Steve Emerson, executive director of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, criticized Illinois law enforcement, calling Mustapha one of more than 300 "unindicted co-conspirators" in the federal government's case against the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a Dallas-based group that was once the nation's largest Muslim charity.

"He is on record raising money for terrorists," Emerson said. "We have a significant problem of radicalization developing in America. It makes no sense to place someone with a documented record of jihad support in a consultative position."

Mustapha, who was never charged with a crime, solicited donations on behalf of the Holy Land Foundation. His lawyer said he believed the money went to support American Muslim causes in the U.S.

"As we learned in the McCarthy era, just being part of being an organization doesn't mean you're engaged in wrongdoing whatsoever," Vodak said. "He was truly engaged in an effort that was support for the Muslim community."

Master Sergeant Isaiah D. Vega, a spokesman for Illinois State Police, said the agency has no intention of reinstating Mustapha. In an earlier statement, Vega said the department would continue to contact community groups in hopes of having someone Muslim officers can rely on for spiritual support.

Ossama Jammal, vice president of the Mosque Foundation, said as long as the Illinois State Police calls for nominations, the Muslim community will submit Mustapha's name.

"When you want someone to serve with police in the line of duty ... you want the best," Jammal said.

"When they ask us to recommend, we have to give them the best we've got. He is our candidate. He will be nominated again and again and again."

— *Manya Brachear*

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1 Comments

Alli on [August 30, 2010 5:56 PM](#)

No wonder Illinois is broke! Why are the tax payers paying for Chaplains for the police department at all??? If officers need a chaplain they should go to their own church. I say its high time we lay off all Chaplains employed by the state.

jerry b. on [August 30, 2010 6:20 PM](#)

Y'know, it's funny. This guy might actually have a case. Hired, then fired. Why?



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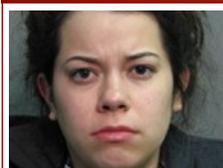
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John on August 30, 2010 10:19 PM

I agree Fire all the chaplains, just a little something I think everyone has heard, seperation of Church and State, It does not only go for schools!!

The State also in my opinion has the right to fire him based on his connections, wether or not he is guilty of a crime is nill, the simple fact that he had a DIRECT connection to a group raising money for hamas is enough, sorry if he says that he did not know about it, the fact he was a part of it is enough! Just because you are not charged with a crime today does not mean he will not get charged tommorow, Maybe the police know something he does not, Maybe there are charges coming around the corner and they do not want to be embarrassed.

daisy on August 31, 2010 12:49 AM

ISP Chaplains are not paid by the State, in fact the last round of Chaplains including this Imam paid for the training out of their pockets.

The U.S. law states Innocent until proven guilty and this Imam was never tried, this is discrimination and guilt by association.

kevin on August 31, 2010 1:00 AM

seperation of church and state is not the same as a ban on religion. chaplains are supplied as a courtesy to the men and women that serve us. do you propose to eliminate them from the military too? the people that put their lives on the line for us do not deserve that.

it would be a first amendment issue if the ISP had only a catholic chaplain and told all officers that they were required to use his services. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." did the ISP or state of illinois make a rule establishing an official religion? did they prohibit a religion? it sounds like you would.

obviously, they are providing multiple religions and denominations, or this guy wouldn't have been appointed in the first place.

people need to go back to the constitution and read what it says. there is nothing in there banning religion, this country was founded on the principles of FREEDOM of religion, not a ban on it from public life.

not to mention, if the guy failed a background check, how many people would be upset if they let him fill the position anyways?

Are you kidding???? on August 31, 2010 1:44 AM

Innocent till proven guilty???? Not on trial. He didn't pass the back ground check. He supported terrorism. This is not racism or discrimination against religion. ISP is still looking for a Muslim chaplain. Just one who isn't tied to terrorism. Chaplains aren't paid by the state and even if they were it wouldn't bankrupt this state. Liberal spending did. If you want to cut something cut nonsense public aid.

dale on August 31, 2010 4:08 PM

No wonder people are leaving the U.S. in droves. We're on track to become the first Spanish speaking, Muslim, Chinese territory in the world.

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