

Rights groups dismiss Cox probe of Iman's death



Cox rules death justified; U.S. Justice case remains open

By Zenobia Jeffries
[The Michigan Citizen](#)

DETROIT — Michigan may be finished investigating the FBI fatal shooting of Detroit Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, but the federal probe continues and questions remain.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) says it is continuing investigation of the FBI arrest team and its four members who

Attorney General Mike Cox reported no puncture wounds or other indication of dog bites were evident on the body of the Imam. Shot Abudllah to death Oct. 28, 2009, in a Dearborn warehouse during a sting operation.

Civil rights and justice activists await a real investigation.

Although the DOJ's office declined to give the status or details of its investigation, spokesperson Xochiti Hinojosa sent an e-mail response to the Michigan Citizen stating, "Our investigation is open."

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, in his report released Sept. 30, concluded that the FBI agents involved in the fatal shooting acted in self-defense and therefore their "use of deadly force ... was legally justified."

The report states that Abdullah did not comply with officers' orders. Cox's office will not bring charges.

Cox used the shooting agents' testimony, along with the FBI investigative report, Dearborn Police Department investigative report, video and audio tapes of the raid, the federal criminal complaint obtained by the FBI against Abudllah and 10 others, and meetings and interviews with the Detroit Police Department, Wayne County Medical Examiner and Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, an independent pathologist who reviewed the autopsy report at the request of the Michigan Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI).

Both the medical examiner and Wecht determined the cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

The four agents shot Abdullah a total of 21 times — two of the agents firing six and eight shots respectively — after releasing an FBI K-9 attack dog on him.

The medical examiner's report does not identify the cause of Abdullah's facial injuries.

However, Wecht determined that the lacerations and abrasions on Abudllah's face and hands were caused by dog bites.

Cox concluded that the injuries were not dog bites.

The Cox report states, "The Wayne County Medical Examiner noted, during the Attorney General interview, that Abdullah's face is lacking puncture wounds — which are typically found in persons who have been subjected to known dog bites." (See photo)

Phone calls by this newspaper to the medical examiner were not returned.

Cox stated one of the theories of the facial wounds indicated the cause as "... the action of the slide on the pistol Abdullah was firing (extremely close to his face)..." Yet, in another section of the report, Cox notes there was no gun powder residue on the body, indicating there were no close range shots.

In a telephone interview with this newspaper, Wecht called the Assistant Attorney General's telephone interview with him a "perfunctory pro forma."

"The Assistant Attorney General didn't seem to be too interested

[in what I had to say]," Wecht said. "For Cox to say the lacerations are from a fall ... you don't get those kinds of [injuries] by falling from standing on a flat surface. "There's no way [you] can sustain multiple lacerations from falling down ... or sliding on a pistol. That's totally ridiculous. Whatever the ultimate conclusions are, are not matters I have addressed."

Wecht says he was skeptical of any report produced by the AG.

"I no more expected the Michigan Attorney General to produce a critical report on the FBI than I expect to wake up tomorrow morning with a head full of hair on my bald head. The whole thing smells," Wecht said.

Another theory Cox stated for the facial injuries was "being turned over by agents to facilitate handcuffing." It was a reference to the fact Abdullah was lying face down, dead, when agents handcuffed him and then rolled him over.

The FBI did not respond to questions about handcuffing a dead man.

According to the Dearborn police investigation cited in Cox's report, Abdullah shot the dog three times, the weapon "pointed in the direction" of the arresting agents.

Abdullah's weapon had no prints on it, which Cox says is not uncommon.

"We got exactly what we expected from the Michigan Attorney General, [that's why] we called for an independent investigation," said Heaster Wheeler, Executive Director of the Detroit Branch NAACP. "We want the U.S. DOJ and their Civil Rights' department to do a full-scale investigation — not a review, just looking to see if procedure was properly followed. [This] needs to be thoroughly done."

Wheeler, who joined CAIR-MI and a coalition of local religious leaders and community activists calling for a federal investigation, says the AG's office has never been a friend to the community of color or civil rights.

"We never get anything from the state," Wheeler told the M.C. "We got what we expected, which is nothing."

Dawud Walid, Executive Director of CAIR-MI, called the AG's conclusions "odd," and raised several concerns surrounding the report.

CAIR-MI is questioning the circumstances by which Cox's office began the investigation (Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy's office declined to investigate); the excessive use of law enforcement officers (including the FBI K-9); shooting a human defending himself against a dog attack; and entrapment.

Walid says, by "default," the case went to Cox's office because Worthy's office declined to investigate.

Spokesperson Maria Miller said that the Prosecutor's office declined to investigate because the FBI would not turn over classified information.

Walid questions the accuracy of Cox's report.

"If Cox's office was not given access to the information that Worthy's office requested to conduct a thorough investigation, then that would bring into question the veracity of Cox's results," he wrote in a letter to Judiciary Committee Chair Congressman John Conyers.

According to Special Agent Jason Pack at FBI headquarters in Washington D.C., none of the information was deemed classified.

"The shooting review team inspectors here in Washington tell me that there was no classified information associated with the shooting investigation," Pack told the M.C.

CAIR-MI is requesting Conyers "hold hearings on the misuse of confidential informants in houses of worship, religious organizations and peace groups, if a thorough review of the FBI protocol of using confidential informants is not conducted by the U.S. Attorney General's office as requested by Conyer's office in January."

On Oct. 6, CAIR-MI filed a lawsuit against the Wayne County Sheriff for its refusal to release information relating to the fatal

shooting. The Sheriff Dept., which was part of a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement task force that executed a series of raids culminating in the death of Imam Abdullah, denied Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests submitted by CAIR-MI pertaining to the case.

CAIR-MI recently filed similar suits against the Michigan State Police, Dearborn Police and Detroit Police departments for non-release of public information.

Spokesperson for the FBI Detroit Field Office Sandra Berchtold told this newspaper that even though other law enforcement was involved in the raid, only FBI agents were inside the warehouse. All others were used on the perimeter.

(Editor's note: We were hesitant to publish the photo because of the desensitizing nature of violence on Blacks. Permission was given by the family through CAIR-MI to publish this photo to show the discrepancy in the AG's report.)



submit your opinion

{ website powered by bulletlink.com }