

CAIR News

Newsletter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

July 1995

Volume 2, Issue 2

First-Ever National Report on Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Issued After Oklahoma City Blast

On May 19, CAIR released a report on incidents of anti-Muslim threats, harassment, stereotyping, property damage and physical assaults that resulted from unfounded links between Muslims and the terrorist attack on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

CAIR detailed more than 200 such incidents, including an attack on a Muslim home that caused a woman to miscarry her near-term baby. The baby was named "Salaam."

According to a CAIR survey of Islamic communities, American Muslims reported the following:

- Many Muslim women were afraid to appear in public wearing Islamic dress.
- Muslim parents feared for their children's safety, and in some cases, kept their children home from school.
- Muslim leaders and community members expressed fears that attendance at religious services might be dangerous.

CAIR will issue an annual report on the status of Muslim civil rights. Anyone who is subjected to harassment, discrimination or attack because of their faith or ethnicity should report this information to CAIR.

CAIR and the National Association of Muslim Women have also established the "Baby Salaam Legal Defense Fund" to help defend Muslim civil rights in America. Community members are being asked to support this fund generously. Note - Copies of the hate crimes report are available (\$5 per copy or computer disk) from CAIR. C



Ibrahim Ahmad (wrongly detained following the Oklahoma blast), the father of baby Salaam, local leaders, and CAIR's director, at a news conference in Oklahoma City

Muslim Communities and Organizations Aid OK Bomb Victims

Many media reports told of Oklahoma residents responding quickly and heroically to aid the survivors of the bomb blast. But few if any outlets reported that the first check received by the Oklahoma City Victims Relief Fund was delivered by the North Texas Muslim community.

In the days following the blast, Muslim communities nationwide organized blood drives and contributed financially to the relief effort. International Islamic Relief Organization (IRO) and Mercy International were on the scene almost immediately. The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) flew 50 volunteers from Dallas to assist in the relief effort. HLF also presented a check of \$5,000 to Oklahoma City and a \$2,500 check to the Red Cross.

A Muslim delegation headed by Nihad Awad, CAIR Executive Director, attended the April 23 memorial service in Oklahoma City. Unfortunately, although the delegation was given "VIP"

seating, no Muslims were among the speakers at the service, and no words of healing were directed toward the Muslim community. Nevertheless, the Muslim presence in the crowd, including women in Islamic dress, was noted by many and drew comments from reporters during live national TV coverage of the service. Mr. Awad also attended the funeral service for "Baby Salaam."

The Muslim delegation met with Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating and presented him with checks totaling \$21,000 collected from various Muslim organizations and communities. Governor Keating thanked CAIR and the Muslim community. (see letter, p. 3) C

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Muslim Activism

Muslims Challenge Negative Provisions of Legislation

Early this year, the "Omnibus Counterterrorism Act of 1995" was introduced to Congress. Certain provisions of this act could have a negative impact on American Muslim civil liberties. Under early forms of the legislation, a person could be:

- convicted of a crime for merely donating to a lawful charity that supports purely legal activities.
- the target of an investigation even though there is no evidence of criminal activity.
- held in detention, deported, or kept from entering the U.S. based on "secret" evidence.

In response to this legislation, CAIR established an "800" number with which community members could send pre-formatted telegrams to President Clinton and Congressman Hyde. Some 1500 telegrams were sent to challenge the legislation.

Muslim Leadership Summit

On April 2nd and 3rd, some 30 American Muslim leaders, representing 20 Islamic organizations, met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the civil liberties implications of the counterterrorism legislation.

Participating groups included the Islamic Society of North America, the Ministry of W. Deen Muhammad, the National Community of Imam Jamil Al-Amin, the American Muslim Council and the American Muslim Alliance.

Following their summit meeting, the Muslim leaders released a statement calling on elected representatives to defend the civil liberties of all Americans and to protect those engaged in charitable fundraising activities.



Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's communication director, and national Muslim leaders, at a news conference challenging unconstitutional provisions of the proposed antiterrorism bill.

Ramadan and Hajj Campaign Show Success

CAIR mailed Ramadan and Hajj "Publicity Resource Kits" to Mosques, Islamic Centers and Muslim activists around the country. Results in terms of positive media coverage were quite good, with accurate information about these Muslim events being used in many local articles. (Copies are still available.)

CAIR Challenges Advertiser Misuse of Islamic Symbols

Following protests from CAIR and members of the American Muslim community, Phoenix-based DoubleTree Hotels Corporation agreed to alter television ads considered offensive to Muslims. In the ads, hotel employees dressed in "Arabian" clothing were shown "praying" to guests in the same way that Muslims pray to God.

CAIR also worked on several similar incidents: Last December, Anheuser-Busch apologized to the Muslim community for use of an Islamic religious phrase printed on the tank-top of a model in a beer commercial. And in February of this year, The House of Seagrams canceled a print ad campaign that fea-

tured the Taj Mahal in an ad for an alcoholic drink.

Postcard Features Quranic Verses on Bare Breast

A New York-based company agreed to cease distribution of a postcard featuring a photograph of the bare chest of a woman with one breast encircled by verses from the Quran, Islam's sacred book. The card, produced by Art Unlimited of The Netherlands, shows the Arabic text of the Quran's chapter 112, "al-Ikhlās."

General Apologizes for "Arab Terrorist" Remark

At a news conference dealing with rioting by Cuban refugees in Panama, Major General George Crocker said the refugees were acting "like Arab terrorists in the Gaza Strip." Following a complaint by CAIR, the Director of Public Affairs for the Department of Defense Southern Command issued an apology which read in part, "His (the general's) illustration was inadvertent and not intended to cause any discredit...He holds the Arab-American and Muslim communities in the utmost respect."

Illinois Attorney General Meets with CAIR to Discuss Mosque Arson

The building housing the Islamic Society of Greater Springfield, Ill., was gutted by fire during the early morning hours of June 6. Springfield fire investigators say tests revealed traces of gasoline at the site of the fire's origin.

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan, in a meeting with CAIR's executive director and local Muslim representatives, pledged support for the state's Islamic community. A statewide hate crimes council is also being considered in the wake of the fire. CAIR, local Muslims and representatives from North American Islamic Trust (NAIT) also met with Springfield officials.

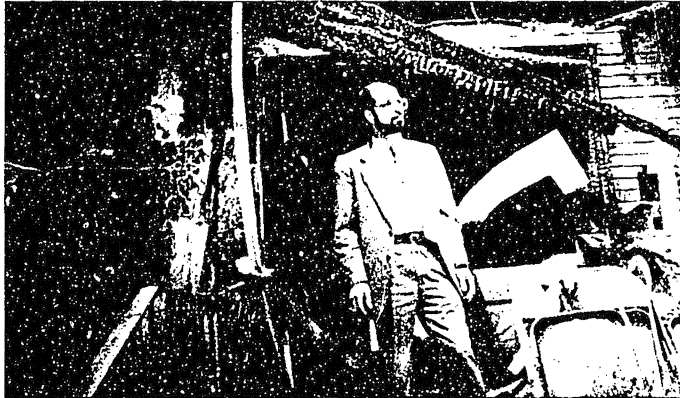
This arson attack is not the first to strike Islamic institutions in the United States. In September of 1994, a nearly-completed mosque in Yuba City, Calif., burned to the ground in what was ruled an arson attack. And in April of this year, a mosque in High Point, N.C., also burned following a suspicious fire.

Donations may be sent to: Islamic Society of Greater Springfield, P.O. Box 92, Springfield, IL 62705 G.

CAIR to Celebrate its First Anniversary September 9

On September 9, CAIR will celebrate its first anniversary with activities in Washington, D.C. CAIR's first year was marked by steady growth and recognition. Work during this year focused on raising public consciousness about stereotyping of Islam and Muslims. Publications available from CAIR include:

- Welcome to our Mosque Brochure
- Hajj and Ramadan Publicity Resource Kits
- Media Relations Handbook
- Analysis of "Jihad in America"
- National Hate Crimes Report



CAIR's executive director inspects the interior of the burned Springfield mosque.



State of Oklahoma
Frank Keating
Governor

April 26, 1995

Mr. Nihad Awad
Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations
1511 K Street NW, Suite 807
Washington, DC 20005

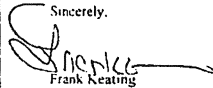
Dear Mr. Awad,

On behalf of the people of Oklahoma, let me again thank you for the most generous contribution to the Victims and Families Relief Fund. I have this morning returned from the bombing site, where rescue workers continue to excavate the dead. On this sad day they are removing the bodies of children from the wreckage of the building's day care center -- and no one knows or cares what religion those children, or those rescuers, practiced.

I am immensely proud of Oklahomans of all races, creeds and faiths. They have come together in shared anguish and shared pride -- a togetherness your gift helped symbolize. I pledge its use for the benefit of the families of our victims in the same spirit.

May Allah bless you always.

Sincerely,


Frank Keating

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Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating's letter to CAIR.