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CAIR-MN Asks Delta to Probe 'Profiling' of Muslim Passengers

ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct. 29 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MN) today called on Delta Airlines to investigate recent allegations of religious profiling of Muslim passengers.

CAIR-MN is calling on Delta to review its policies on what constitutes suspicious behavior and to conduct trainings to help staff avoid profiling of passengers.

In one incident reported to CAIR-MN, four Muslim men were escorted off a Delta flight when it landed at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport last month. A flight attendant had reported suspicious behavior after one of the men dropped a pen while filling out a customs form and bent down to pick it up.

In another incident, a Pinnacle Airlines commuter plane operated by Delta made an emergency landing in Fort Knox, N.D., after a flight attendant raised concerns about a smoke detector in a lavatory used by a University of North Dakota Muslim student from Saudi Arabia. The student and two other Muslim students he was traveling with were detained and questioned by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents and the local FBI for five hours, while the rest of the passengers were bused to their destination.

SEE: Plane Carrying Saudi Flight Students was Diverted to ND airport, Checked for Bombs

<http://www.startribune.com/nation/105253243.html>

On Tuesday, a Muslim family in Tennessee was removed from a Delta flight operated by Comair at the Memphis International Airport. According to a Comair spokesperson, the "crew became concerned when a passenger exited the lavatory after an extended period of time and damage was found in the lavatory." Investigators found nothing wrong with the lavatory.

Video: Family in Muslim Clothing Ejected from Flight

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06b3gB42QtQ>

Video: Muslims Call Plane Incident Islamophobia

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-CFw0jhZ00>

"Wearing 'Muslim clothing,' using the restroom or picking up a dropped pen seem to have become pretexts for religious and ethnic profiling," said CAIR-MN Civil Rights Director Taneeza Islam. "We believe these incidents are based on stereotyping that targets Muslim passengers and those perceived to be Muslim."

Ms. Islam cited remarks by former NPR analyst Juan Williams that seemed to legitimize profiling Muslim passengers. NPR terminated Williams' contract after he said, "[I]f I see people who are in Muslim garb and I think, you know, they are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried. I get nervous." Ms. Islam noted that none of the terrorists in past incidents on airplanes wore "Muslim garb."

SEE: Report Shows Racial Profiling Pervasive Across America (CAIR-WA)

<http://tinyurl.com/25dcnwe>

CAIR Legislative Fact Sheet: Help Stop Racial, Religious & Ethnic Profiling

<http://tinyurl.com/ygemjsq>

In 2006, six imams, or Islamic religious leaders, filed a lawsuit against US Airways after they were removed from a flight in Minneapolis based on their race and religion. The imams and the air carrier settled out of court last year.

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CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties group. 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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SOURCE Council on American-Islamic Relations

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