CAIR

2025 CIVIL RIGHTS REPORT

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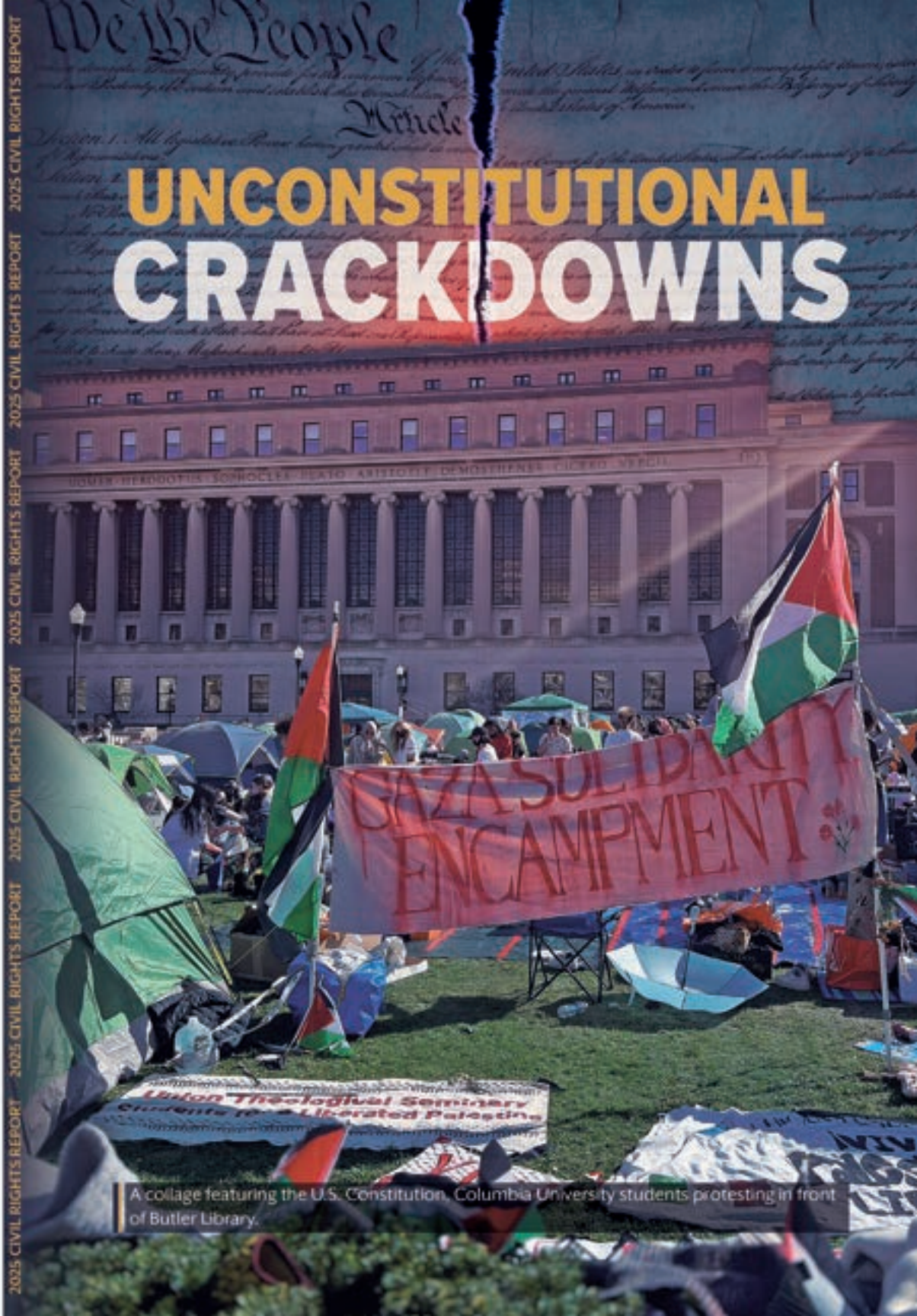

A collage featuring the U.S. Constitution, Columbia University students protesting in front of Butler Library.

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2025 Civil Rights Report

This report text was completed in early January 2024 and reflects developments up to that point. Cover image used with permission.

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CAIR is the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. CAIR's vision is to be a leading advocate for justice and mutual understanding. CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims. La misión de CAIR es proteger las libertades civiles, mejorar la comprensión del Islam, promover la justicia, y empoderar a los musulmanes en los Estados Unidos.

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Note on Language

In short, Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism. It is a fear, hatred, or prejudice toward Islam and Muslims that results in a pattern of discrimination and oppression. Islamophobia creates a distorted understanding of Islam and Muslims by transforming the global and historical faith tradition of Islam, along with the rich history of cultural and ethnic diversity of its adherents, into a set of stereotyped characteristics most often reducible to themes of violence, civilizational subversion, and fundamental otherness. Islamophobia must also be understood as a system of both religious and racial animosity that is perpetuated by private citizens as well as cultural and political structures.

“April 19, 1995, marked a turning point in the American Muslim experience. On that day, and for some days thereafter, Muslims were blamed for the devastating attack on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. This unfounded accusation led to numerous incidents of anti-Muslim harassment and violence. From that terrible experience came the decision to publish an annual report on Muslim civil rights in the United States - Executive Summary, The Price of Ignorance, 1996

While anti-Arab racism is certainly not synonymous with Islamophobia, Muslim and Arab identities have long been conflated, particularly by those who seek to villainize both, making anti-Muslim hate part and parcel of anti-Arab, and specifically, anti-Palestinian racism. Anti-Palestinian racism has been defined as “a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives.”[1]

Anti-Muslim rhetoric is used to justify anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Palestinian racism is also weaponized against those who are presumed to be Palestinian, including Muslims. In instances of this report, we therefore analyze how the use of anti-Muslim, as well as anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab rhetoric, deeply impacts the lives of American Muslims.

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Executive Summary

CAIR research staff identify three standout trends in this report's findings:

1. CAIR's civil rights reports have told the story of American Muslims being targeted due to their faith since its inception in the wake of 1995's Oklahoma City bombing. In 2024 we find a different theme: **Muslims—along with Palestinians, Arabs, Jews, African Americans, Asian Americans and others—were targeted due to their anti-genocide and anti-apartheid viewpoints.**

2. **For the first time employment, discrimination was the top type of incident reported to CAIR.** For the second year in a row, the Biden-backed Gaza genocide drove a wave of Islamophobia in the United States. Many corporate promises to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2020 went apparently unfulfilled as employers punished or smeared staff, particularly minorities, who advocated against Israel's military occupation, apartheid, and genocide of Palestinians. Adopting a similar posture, many university administrators favored state force and institutional discipline over such hard conversations.

3. **Law enforcement encounters climbed from 295 total in 2023 to 506 in 2024. This is a 71.5 percent increase. This spike coincided with the student anti-genocide encampments.**

CAIR offices received 8,658 incoming complaints nationwide in 2024. This marks the highest number of complaints CAIR has recorded since our first civil rights report was published in 1996. Employment discrimination complaints comprised 15.4 percent of total complaints received in 2024. This also marks the first time employment discrimination has been the highest-reported category to CAIR offices.

CAIR's National Executive Director Nihad Awad and National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper joined thousands at a rally to call for Palestinian human rights in Washington D.C. Source: CAIR.

Previously, the highest-recorded number of complaints occurred in 2023. **The number of complaints received in 2024 marks a 7.4% increase from the 8,061 complaints reported in 2023.**

CAIR identified **40 incidents explicitly targeting spaces designated for Islamic worship in 2024.**

Behind these numbers are human tragedies. In Texas, Elizabeth Wolf was indicted "on attempted capital murder and causing bodily injury to a child,"[2] after allegedly attempting to drown two Muslim children. A hate crime enhancement added to Wolf's indictment notes that she "targeted the children because they were 'Muslims or persons of Middle Eastern descent.'" Cuffed and taken away by a police officer, Wolf reportedly shouted, "Tell [the mother] I will kill her, and I will kill her whole family."

In Illinois, Alexandra Szustakiewicz reportedly attacked a man and his pregnant wife at a Panera Bread in Downers Grove over a Palestine hoodie worn by one of her alleged victims.[3] Szustakiewicz was arrested and charged with two hate crime counts and disorderly conduct.[4] In August, a Florida man was sentenced for attacking a Muslim female U.S. Postal Service worker. In 2023, Kenneth Pinkney had approached the victim—who was in her Postal Service uniform and operating a marked truck—and tore off her hijab (Islamic head scarf), slapped, and punched her in the face, causing her to bleed from her mouth and left scratches on her face.

The wave of Islamophobic bias that dominates this report impacted the status of Muslim civil rights in many ways in 2024, several of which are included in this report's special sections:

1. University administrators used state force, university discipline, and policies restricting expressive activity to repress anti-genocide viewpoints. CAIR launched its Unhostile Campus Campaign to address the hostile climate in many places in higher education.

2. Anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian congressional investigations were initiated by House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chair James Comer (R-Ky.) and House Education and Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.)

3. Legislation commonly referred to as the "Nonprofit Killer Bill" advanced in Congress. It expected to be reintroduced and advanced to President Trump in 2025. The legislation would allow the Secretary of the Treasury to revoke the nonprofit tax status of religious and advocacy organizations without justification, charges, or due process if it is enacted into law. The legislation was meant to target charities and nonprofit organizations who were voicing opposition to Israel's policies of occupation, apartheid, and genocide. It could be easily weaponized to target any nonprofit organization that any President finds objectionable.

2024 is the first time Employment Discrimination has been the top type.

1,329

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION INCIDENTS

4. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Turner (R-Ohio) used alarming tactics to justify the continuation of the backdoor search loophole in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act's section 702.[5] Chairman Turner and Democrat Jim Himes (D-Conn.) were advocating for legislation that would increase warrantless surveillance, targeting pro-Palestinian advocates, immigrants, and their families.

5. We noted above that employment discrimination was the highest reported category CAIR received in 2024. CAIR is preparing a stand-alone report on this subject.

This report's special sections also include some signs of progress. The Supreme Court ruled 9-0 in favor of CAIR's arguments against the federal No Fly List. Also, attorneys representing people impacted by President Trump's 2017 Muslim Ban secured a major agreement creating a path forward for nearly 25,000 impacted people.[6] Finally, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) prohibited the sale of personal data from Muslim app users for potential use in warrantless surveillance. In a statement, the FTC said that Data broker X-Mode Social and its successor Outlogic will be prohibited from sharing or selling any sensitive location data to settle allegations that the company sold precise location data that could be used to track people's visits to sensitive locations such as medical and reproductive health clinics, places of religious worship, and domestic abuse shelters.

Based on these and other developments, CAIR makes several recommendations in this report:

1. Public officials at all levels of government, corporate leaders, and those speaking on behalf of places of education, must respect free speech on Palestine and the value of human life. If they choose to comment on international affairs such as events in Israel and Palestine, then equal weight and attention should be given to Palestinian suffering. If they choose to comment on issues relating to bias domestically, then the very well-documented surge in anti-Muslim bigotry and racism must be included in their concerns.

2. The Trump administration must suspend the FBI's dissemination of their watchlist, which leaked copies show to be "almost entirely lists of Arabic and Muslim names."

3. The U.S. Government must tie police funding to the submission of hate crimes data.

4. Mosques and other visibly Muslim institutions should consider taking advantage of security grants.

5. Banks must end the wrongful targeting of American Muslim, Arab, and Persian families.

Incoming Complaint Data Findings

1. CAIR received 8,658 complaints nationwide in 2024. This marks the highest number of complaints CAIR has recorded since our first civil rights report was published in 1996.

2. The 8,658 complaints received in 2024 are a 7.4 percent increase from the 8,061 complaints reported in 2023. Previously, the highest recorded number of complaints occurred in 2023.

3. For the first time ever, employment discrimination is the highest-reported category to CAIR. The 1,329 employment discrimination complaints comprised 15.4 percent of total complaints received in 2024.

4. Immigration/asylum (1,283 complaints, or 14.8%), education discrimination (848 complaints, or 9.8%), and hate crimes and incidents (647 complaints, or 7.5%) are the other highest-reported categories.[7]

5. CAIR offices received 1,869 total complaints (21.6 percent of the year's total) in April and May. This spike likely reflects university administrator's targeting the student anti-genocide encampments that received significant media attention in April. These two months account for one-fifth of all incoming complaints in 2024. In April, CAIR offices received 881 total complaints. In May, CAIR offices received 988 total complaints.

In December, CAIR-Chicago and the Law Office of Maria Kari joined CAIR chapters nationwide to announce a lawsuit against the U.S. State Department for abandoning Palestinian Americans in Gaza. Source: CAIR-Chicago.

CAIR-NY led a press conference in front of City Hall after over a year of protests to urge the City Council to call for a permanent ceasefire in Palestine. Source: CAIR-New York / SD Herzog.

6. Law enforcement encounters climbed from 295 total in 2023 to 506 in 2024. This is a 71.5 percent increase. This spike coincided with the student anti-genocide encampments. Thirty percent of all law enforcement encounter complaints were reported just in May 2024, and nine percent were reported in April 2024.

7. Maryland's incoming complaints in the first quarter of 2021 were notable compared to other offices. The Maryland office reported the highest incoming complaints among all CAIR offices—excepting our headquarters, which serves all states that do not have a CAIR office—in January (84) and February (122), likely due to contentious countywide and statewide legislative debates around the Gaza genocide. This continued into March (82). This is when many offices started recording jumps in reports related to student advocacy in educational institutions including campus encampments and walk-outs. The Minnesota office reported 81 incoming complaints related to housing discrimination. This is 43 percent of the total housing discrimination (187) complaints received by all CAIR offices in 2023.

IN 2024
CAIR received a total of
8,658
Complaints
Employment discrimination:
1,329
Immigration and asylum cases:
1,283
Education discrimination:
848
Hate crimes and incidents:
647

Islamic Place of Worship Incident Data

CAIR identified 40 incidents explicitly targeting Islamic institutions, including mosques, Islamic community centers, or other spaces self-identified as a Muslim place of worship in 2024.[8] The incidents do not include private residences, but it would include prayer spaces like airport meditation rooms and Jummah-only locations if the incident is understood to be Islamophobic in nature. To be included, an objective observer should be able to reasonably conclude a bias incident occurred.[9] All reports are sourced from publicly available information including traditional media or social media posts.

2024 Islamic Place of Worship Incidents by Type

Damage, destruction, or vandalism (DDV)	24
Harassment	7
Intimidation	7
Zoning	2
Total	**40**

Damage-Destruction-Vandalism (DDV): Incidents involving property damage or physical injury to people.

Harassment: Uninvited or unwelcome demonstrations or acts that involve Islamophobic slurs. This category includes verbal harassment and/or assault, such as being called a "terrorist."

Intimidation: An escalation of harassment to threats of violence, for example threatening to kill Muslims, or speech that appears intended to make a person fearful for their safety—or other acts not involving property damage that are apparently intended to cause fear in those targeted by the act. This category includes armed anti-Islam demonstrations, brandishing weapons and placing severed pigs' heads on mosque property, and plans to conduct an attack that were not operationalized.

Zoning: Islamophobic issues raised during zoning proceedings. An incident is included in the zoning category only if bias is clearly identified in zoning proceedings. Places of worship of many faiths routinely face opposition from neighbors due to traffic or land use concerns.

Given the vagaries of hate crimes laws and the sometimes reluctance to prosecute anti-Muslim racism as a hate crime, inclusion is not dependent on law enforcement charging the incident as a hate crime. Since mosques are gathering places, the incident may involve either the facility being targeted or people.

40 INCIDENTS

AT ISLAMIC PLACES OF WORSHIP IN 2024

Note: The photo is illustrative only. It is not a 2024 incident.

Observations on the Incoming Complaint and Islamic Place of Worship Incident Data Data Findings

CAIR's civil rights reports have told the story of American Muslims being targeted due to their faith since its inception in the wake of 1995's Oklahoma City bombing. In 2024 we find a different theme: Muslims—along with Palestinians, Arabs, Jews, African Americans, Asian Americans and others—were targeted due to their anti-genocide and anti-apartheid viewpoints. As this report highlights, the wave of Islamophobia that initiated after the start of the latest round of violence emerging from Israel's decades-long policies of occupation and apartheid of Palestinians is driven by a toxic combination of Islamophobic stereotypes, views that Israeli policy is above reproach, and efforts to silence opposing viewpoints using character assassination, institutional discipline, and at times state force.

Places of employment continued the crack down on anti-genocide staff. Immigration/Asylum issues topped CAIR's incoming complaints in 2021, 2022, and 2023. By contrast, in 2024, employment discrimination was the highest-reported category to CAIR offices. While traditional media drew significant attention to the plight of anti-genocide student protestors in April and May, employees often suffered outside the public eye. In 2021, journalists Tracy Jan, Jena McGregor, and Meghan Hoyer wrote, "After the murder of George Floyd ignited nationwide protests, corporate America acknowledged it could no longer stay silent and promised to take an active role in confronting systemic racism." Later in the article they note, "It will be difficult to assess whether corporations deliver measurable results."[10] CAIR's 2024 data suggests anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian racism thrives in corporate America.

In January 2024, protesters gathered in Washington, D.C., as part of a nationwide demonstration to show solidarity with Palestinians, calling for a ceasefire and an end to the genocide in Gaza. Source: CAIR-National.

The 71 percent increase in law enforcement encounters likely reflects decisions by too many university administrators to deploy state force against anti-genocide protestors. A survey of California college students identified a significant increase in harassment and discrimination on campus. According to researchers at Princeton University, 95 percent of demonstrations occurring between October 7 and May 12 were peaceful, with "no reports of encampment protesters engaging in physical violence or destructive activity."[11] In our May 2024 report "'Hostile': How Universities Target Anti-Genocide Protesters While Enabling Anti-Palestinian Racism and Islamophobia," we note:

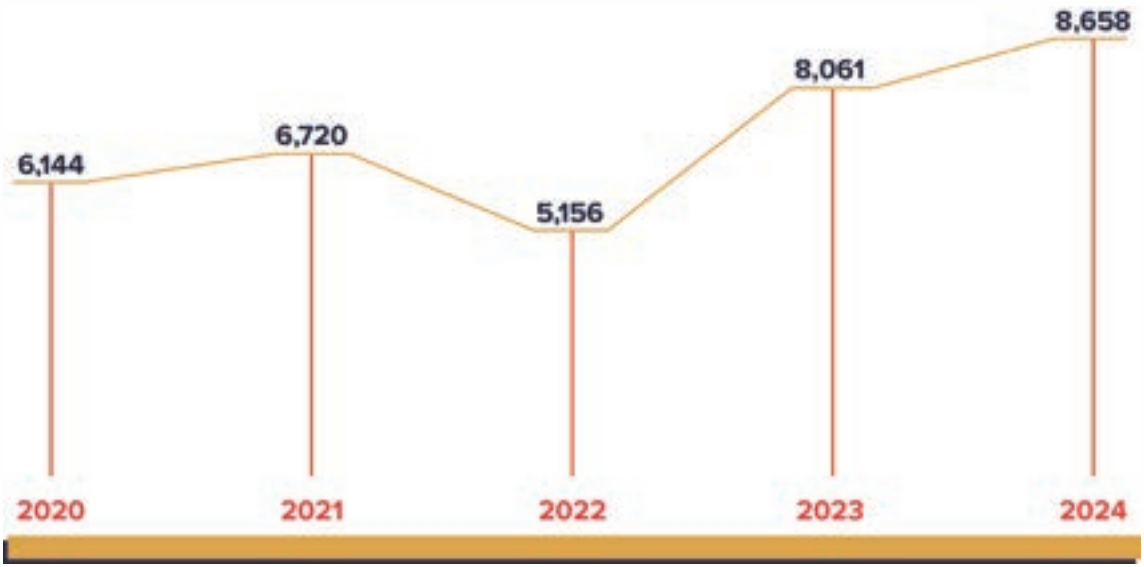
> "Many university administrators have not only opted to ignore students' peaceful and popular calls for Palestinian human rights but have themselves explicitly sought to stifle them. They have canceled and censored voices calling for Palestinian human rights, introduced new university policies with the seeming intent of suppressing free speech, and even unleashed law enforcement on their own students. In some instances, universities have even sought to suppress the democratic voice of their own student body, condemning or even shutting down resolutions calling for divestment. Without protest, many important advancements in American history–ending child labor, voting rights for women, ending school segregation–may have never come to pass."

CAIR-California's campus climate report, based on survey responses from 720 students at 87 public and private colleges and universities during the 2023-2024 academic year, revealed that nearly 50% of Muslim students experienced harassment or discrimination on campus—a significant increase from the 40% reported in CAIR-California's 2020 report. The findings also highlighted how the October 7, 2023, attacks and the subsequent genocide in Gaza exacerbated Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian hate, and anti-Arab racism, leaving Muslim students feeling targeted and unsupported.[12]

CAIR-New York surveyed younger students and in September reported, "As a result of students voicing their opinions on Palestine, 32% of students said they experienced school silencing, 13% said they experienced unwanted attention from school staff, 11% said they experienced unwanted attention from authorities, 10% said they experienced online harassment/doxing, 9.5 % said they experienced social isolation.[13] Overall, CAIR-New York's research, "revealed that nearly 60% of Muslim students in New York have experienced bullying at school by their peers, especially after Israel's onslaught in the Gaza Strip."[14]

While most CAIR offices saw spikes in April and May around the student encampments, Maryland and Minnesota had additional noteworthy experiences. The Maryland office reported 122 total incoming complaints in February likely due to contentious legislative debates around the Gaza genocide. The Minnesota office reported 81 incoming complaints related to housing discrimination. This is 43 percent of the total housing discrimination (187) complaints received by all CAIR offices in 2023. Maryland staff report that this significant number of requests for assistance occurred

during the 2024 legislative session that ran from January through April. Several bills, including a ceasefire resolution, resulted in contentious moments. There was also a particularly contentious ceasefire hearing in Howard County in February when the county council declined to allow public comment and struck down a county-level ceasefire resolution. Maryland staff report that at least two community members were physically assaulted in an altercation outside the hearing chamber by pro-Israel groups. Minnesota staff report that the need for culturally responsive housing justice in Minnesota drove their spike in such cases. The Lino Lakes City Council's decision to halt progress on the Madina Lakes project is one manifestation of this problem. The Madina Lakes project aimed to provide much-needed facilities for the Minnesota Muslim community, including a mosque, houses, and commercial benefits to the Lino Lakes community. Despite efforts to engage constructively with the city and address concerns raised during public hearings, the council's decision to halt the process is viewed by many as discriminatory and Islamophobic as well as a departure from established procedures.



Total Complaints CAIR Received 2020-2024

Complaint Categories

CAIR staff nationwide use the following definitions to categorize the incidents that are being reported to them. The types and definitions last changed in 2022.

Airline Discrimination: Incidents involving travelers and passengers that are not initiated by government agencies. This type of discrimination can include an airline pilot having passengers removed from a flight for speaking a non-English language or because of their religious clothing. It also includes passengers being removed after being harassed by other passengers. If the community member is an employee of the airline and performing their work duties, then the incident is classified as Employment Discrimination.

Banking Discrimination: Banking-specific discrimination based on perceived identity/social class such as religion, race, ethnicity, or disability. This type of discrimination may result in an individual's bank account or credit being closed for unexplained reasons. It includes peer-to-peer payment apps such as Venmo, CashApp, and Zelle and money transfer services like Western Union.

Bullying: Sustained abusive treatment in a K-12 or higher education setting such as physical force, hurtful teasing, and intimidation leveled at someone with relatively less social power by someone with relatively more.

In November, CAIR-CA and the Center for the Prevention of Hate and Bullying (CPHB) announced the launch of the 2024 Campus Climate Report, which shed light on the lived experiences of Muslim college students across California and offered recommendations for addressing the challenges they face. Source: CAIR-Los Angeles.

Denial of Service: Discrimination by a place of business open to the public, like a restaurant or store, that denies service to an individual. This type of discrimination could include, for example, refusing to serve someone wearing hijab or denying them access to a bathroom.

Education Discrimination: Islamophobic school curriculum, failure to accommodate a reasonable religious request, and holiday denials in a K-12 or higher education setting. This does not include instances of Bullying or instances involving Sports Discrimination.

Employment Discrimination: Discrimination by an employer based on age, race, sex, religion, national origin, or physical/mental disability. Examples of employment discrimination cases include an employer refusing to allow an individual to pray or undertake another religious practice, an employer creating or fostering a hostile work environment that targets an individual based on their ethnicity, race, or religion, or terminating or otherwise taking action against an individual because of their ethnicity, race, or religion.

Family Law Discrimination: Discrimination based on perceived identity/social class such as religion, race, ethnicity, or disability in family law proceedings. This type of discrimination may include being treated unfairly in custody or divorce proceedings.

In November, CAIR-Los Angeles, along with Jewish Voice for Peace, Los Angeles (JVP-LA), Muslim Student Association West (MSA West), and Yalla Indivisible, called on the Orange County District Attorney's Office (OCDA) to drop criminal charges against the fifty peaceful protesters arrested during an anti-genocide demonstration at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). Source: CAIR-Los Angeles.

CAIR-Maryland Outreach Coordinator Kimberly Syuardi spoke at a press conference announcing a lawsuit filed by CAIR and Palestine Legal on behalf of University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine to challenge the university's decision to cancel the group's interfaith vigil to honor the lives lost during Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza. Source: CAIR-Maryland.

FBI Interrogation: An FBI agent approaches an individual and conducts, or attempts to conduct, an interview. FBI agents commonly approach individuals at work, school, or their home. The individual who has been approached may not know why the FBI is interested in speaking with them.

First Amendment/BDS: Violations of an individual's right to free speech and expression, frequently as it relates to the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement. Violations may include being required to denounce the BDS movement as part of a contract with the state. Other examples may include violations of an individual's right to practice and express their religion in public, including the right to wear hijab or other religious clothing.

Hate Crime/Hate Incident: A crime committed against someone based on perceived identity/social class such as religion, race, ethnicity, or disability. This type of crime can include violent assault, harassment, and threats. It also includes verbal harassment such as a person entering a mall and being called a "terrorist" or told to go back home, other non-criminal acts of hate, and also mosque vandalism.

Healthcare Discrimination: Denial of access to healthcare based on perceived identity/ social class such as religion, race, ethnicity, or disability. This type of discrimination may include outright refusal to treat a patient, but also other poor treatment, like dismissal of a patient's symptoms, assumptions about a patient's health based on perceived identity, or refusal to provide care in a patient's preferred language.

Housing Discrimination: Denial of access to housing based on perceived identity/ social class such as religion, race, ethnicity, or disability. This type of discrimination may include a landlord or listing agent's refusal to rent to an individual, charging them higher fees, or refusal to show properties to tenants based on perceived identity.

Incarceree Rights: Violations of a prisoner's rights to personal property, privacy, mail, civil rights, and constitutional rights. An incarceree has the right to practice their religion in prison. Examples of common violations of a prisoner's right to practice their religion include a prison's refusal to provide halal/kosher meals upon request, refusal to allow a prisoner to pray Friday prayer, refusal to provide religious materials like a Quran or prayer rug, and refusal to allow a prisoner to wear religious clothing like hijab or kufi. Also includes women being denied wearing hijab by law enforcement, not while incarcerated but while being arrested or during mugshot pictures.

In October, CAIR-Philadelphia Executive Director Ahmet Tekelioglu spoke at a press conference in which CAIR, alongside faith and civic leaders, called for a comprehensive investigation into the removal of a Muslim woman's hijab after being arrested by the Philadelphia Police Department for protesting in a public space at Temple University. Source: CAIR-Philadelphia.

Immigration/Asylum: Immigration is the process of an individual who wants to leave their current country of residence and live permanently elsewhere. Asylum is a protection grantable to foreign nationals who meet the legal definition of a "refugee." For those fleeing persecution, violence, war, or famine, they may seek asylum in another country for safety. Depending on the country of origin, cases can get delayed or intentionally stalled for the fear of the individual being a "terrorist" or involved in "terrorist activities."

Law Enforcement Encounter: Excessive use of force by local, state, or federal law enforcement against an individual, such as beating, shooting, improper takedowns, and unwarranted use of tasers. Also includes community members otherwise appearing to be inappropriately targeted by law enforcement and includes overseas questioning. It does not include FBI interrogations or incarceree rights.

Other Discrimination: Any other mistreatment of an individual based on their ethnicity, race, religion, disability, sex, or other characteristic or perceived characteristic not already mentioned by a non-government entity. It does not include other government discrimination.

Other Government Discrimination: Incidents involving discrimination by a local, state, or federal entity, but not covered by other categories.

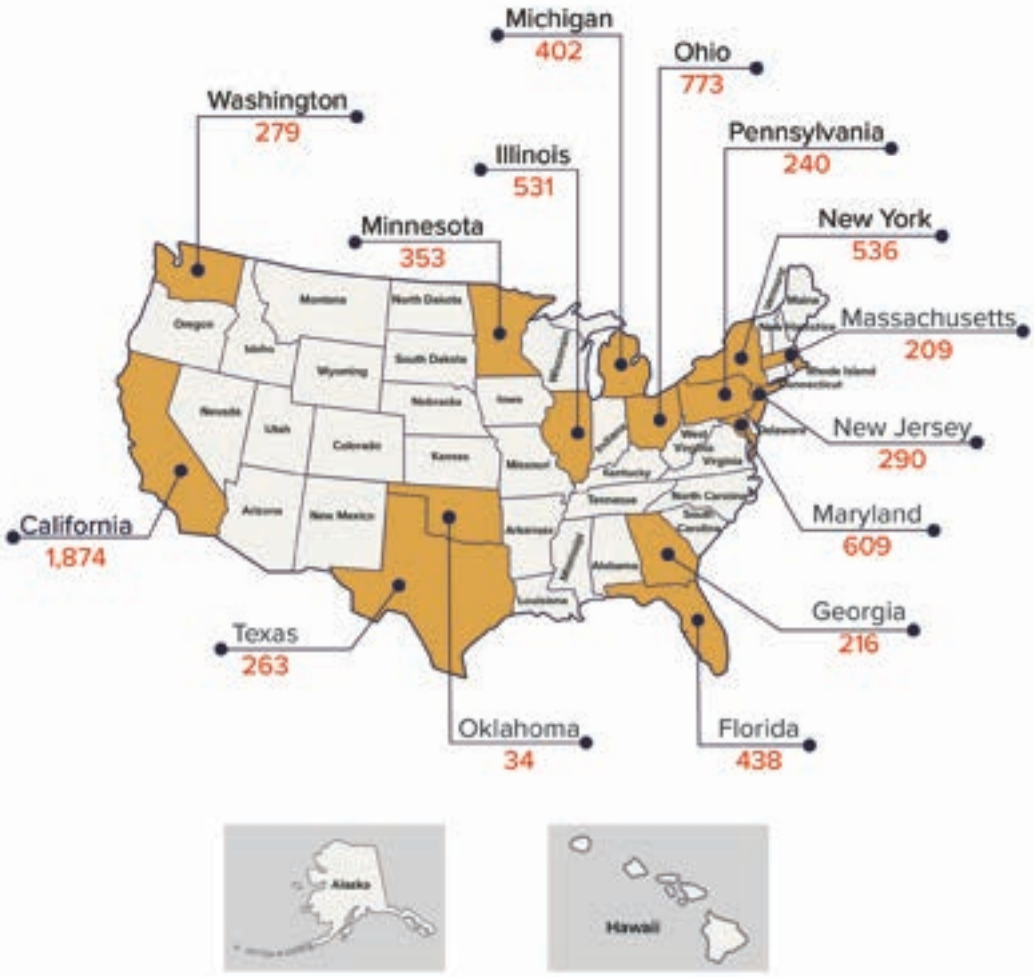
Out of Scope: Anything outside the parameters of our work and mission.

Sports Discrimination: Incidents involving an individual participating in organized sports. Examples include inappropriate use of ethnic clothing, chanting slurs, failure to accommodate reasonable religious requests such as wearing a headscarf or allowing players to hydrate at sunset during Ramadan.

Watchlist/Travel: Placement of an individual, group, or family on the U.S. Terrorist Screening Database (a.k.a. watchlist). The government does not provide reasons and documentation to the individual(s) involved. Individuals are often placed on a watchlist after international travel to Muslim-majority countries. Indicators of watchlist placement include "SSSS" printed on a boarding pass, excessive screening and searching, being pulled to an office/area of airport and asked a series of questions, and other indicators that someone is being singled out by officers. This can include improper questioning, secondary screening, or denial of boarding irrespective of immigration status. This category does not include airline discrimination.

In January, a CAIR attorney presented oral arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court in Fikre v. FBI, a case arising out of Yonas Fikre's unlawful placement on the FBI's secret No Fly List. Source: CAIR-National.

2024 Complaints by CAIR Affiliate



Note: CAIR's headquarters processes all complaints from states where we do not currently have an affiliate. Those complaints account for the rest of the 2024 total. Totals should not be read as indicative of hot spots. See our limitations section.

Lived Experiences of Islamophobia

This section provides examples of the effects of Islamophobia on the lived experiences of American Muslims and efforts to secure justice for them. We try to provide a selection of incident types and geographic locations. We cannot always provide details of all cases as many are subject to attorney-client privilege and if a client does not give us permission to make details public, we must honor that. These anecdotes are the human face of the data presented earlier. All incidents occurred in or reflect key actions taken in 2024. Litigation can require years to resolve and crimes are often tried or sentenced months after the inciting incident. This section contains sensitive material that some people may find disturbing, including violence and harassment.

Anti-Mosque Incidents

Alabama: Someone reportedly sent a message to the Masjid Baitul Haqq mosque in Mobile saying that they plan to "shoot your mosque up" and "kill as many as possible" with an AR-10 and detonate a bomb in the mosque's bathroom.[15] Mosque officials reported the threat to police. After a search, police said no evidence of a physical threat was discovered at the mosque.[16]

California: In November, a right-wing online publication alleged that Governor Newsom gave millions of dollars to mosques that "cheer the annihilation of Jews" as part of his security grants to religious centers. The article was reportedly full of Islamophobic tropes and out-of-context quotes, creating the impression that the majority, if not all, of the mosques and Muslim organizations who received security grants were hateful. Following the article's publication, several major mosques in Southern California informed CAIR about being approached by California's Office of Emergency Services (CAL-OES) to conduct emergency site visits to investigate the mosques. CAIR staff reached out to CAL-OES to express concern about their actions being based on a problematic and Islamophobic article with a political agenda. CAL-OES subsequently canceled the emergency visits and the mosques and religious centers were able to benefit from the security grants at a time when hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Muslims and mosques were at an all-time high.

New Jersey: Jacob Beacher, 24, pled guilty to a federal hate crime after he broke into the Center for Islamic Life at Rutgers University (CILRU) in New Brunswick on the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr and destroyed property. According to the Department of Justice, "on April 10, during the Eid-al-Fitr holiday, Beacher broke into the CILRU around 2:41 a.m., where he damaged the CILRU's property, including several religious artifacts, such as Turbah prayer stones, which are clay stones on which some Muslims prostrate during prayer, and numerous other items that contained holy language from the Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture. The complaint also alleges that Beacher stole a Palestinian flag and a charity box belonging to the CILRU."[17]

Michigan: CAIR-Michigan announced that it had reached a settlement in its case against Lodi Township on behalf of Masjid Al-Farook. The settlement will allow for the establishment

of the first Muslim place of worship in the township. In early 2024, CAIR-Michigan filed a lawsuit on behalf of Masjid Al-Farook under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) alleging that Lodi Township's zoning scheme made it impossible to establish a place of worship within the township.[18]

California: CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area welcomed the arrest of a suspect in connection with multiple acts of vandalism at Masjid al-Tawheed in San Francisco during Ramadan.[19] The suspect, caught on surveillance footage, was reportedly involved in damaging the mosque's property including breaking windows and defacing the mosque's entrance. The arrest occurred when the suspect returned to the mosque, where mosque leadership engaged him in conversation until the San Francisco Police Department arrived and took him into custody. The suspect, 35-year-old Robert Gray, is awaiting charges of vandalism and violation of civil rights through damaging the property of another.

Maryland: A male carrying an American flag, reportedly entered the Diyanet Center of America's courtyard, which was filled with worshipers, and made comments and behaved in an erratic manner that caused some community members to feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Bullying

Maryland: A former roommate allegedly posted a video online baselessly accusing two Muslim University of Maryland students of antisemitism and revealing their private information. Following the doxing, the two Muslim students reportedly received death threats and were harassed. The former roommate, who had allegedly made anti-Palestinian comments and slurs, created a hostile and uncomfortable environment for the Muslim students during their temporary living arrangement. The doxing videos included the students' full names and place of employment. One doxing video, which had amassed over 207 thousand views and 15 thousand likes, was posted by the former roommate after the university's Office of Student Misconduct concluded "a preponderance of the evidence did not substantiate" a previously filed complaint against the Muslim students. In December, CAIR's Maryland office filed a Title VI complaint with the university's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). CAIR's Maryland office was also working with lawmakers to introduce a bill in the 2025 session of the Maryland General Assembly that would impose stricter penalties for doxing incidents.

AI-generated image illustrating two Muslim University of Maryland students facing harassment and threats after being falsely accused and doxed online.

Education Discrimination

New Jersey: An assistant principal at Edison High School apparently threatened members of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) when the group requested to host a joint Ramadan iftar event with area schools. The MSA has held joint iftar events during Ramadan in previous years. MSA members reportedly briefly met with Assistant Principal Nicole Himmelstein in February to discuss their annual Ramadan iftar event. Himmelstein denied the request, citing security concerns. In an audio recording of the meeting that was provided to CAIR, Himmelstein is allegedly heard threatening the students if they pursued the issue. “I have no problem contacting your university where you got in and explaining what’s going on if you want to take it further,” Himmelstein allegedly says in the audio recording. Himmelstein also questioned the Muslim student’s character and values. “You guys are not upholding good leadership skills, and I don’t think any university would want to have students who don’t fulfill good character and values. Do we understand?” Himmelstein appears to say on the audio.[20] CAIR-New Jersey released the audio and called upon the Edison Board of Education to investigate the situation. Local community members also voiced concerns to the board. The findings and consequences of the subsequent investigation are confidential; however, the Himmelstein is still employed at the school and the MSA now reports that they have not had any subsequent issues.

California: CAIR-California successfully obtained religious accommodation for a preschool child attending H. Frank Dominguez Elementary School. The accommodation allows the child to go on a vegan/vegetarian diet that complies with halal dietary restrictions. After this success, CAIR staff determined to effect a larger change in the San Bernardino City Unified School District (SBCUSD) and ensure that all children who required religious accommodation would have a clear procedure to follow in the future. As a result, the district introduced an improved policy in July 2024.

Utah: CAIR sought the removal of an educator working for Canyons School district after receiving a complaint and supporting materials indicating that the teacher was promoting Islamophobic stereotypes in class. Documents provided to CAIR seemed designed to associate Islam, Arab culture, and terrorism. One handout used a faux-Arabic script in the header, while individual boxes were labeled “Al Qaeda, Jihadist, Radical Muslim” and “PLO, Hamas, Hezbollah.” Another falsely asserted that because of Sharia, "Slavery still exists among Arab Muslims” and that under Sharia law “a non-Muslim may not rule even over a Muslims [sic] minority.” These claims are inaccurate. The materials and subsequent classroom discussion reportedly generated at least one explicitly Islamophobic remark from a student. Following CAIR’s intervention, the Utah school district announced a teacher was no longer with the school district and said an internal investigation found, “materials distributed during a high school geography class contained content that was culturally insensitive and had misleading information about a major world religion.”[21]

Georgia: A middle school student wearing a scarf with a Palestinian flag was pulled from class by a school counselor. He was told that he was not allowed to wear his scarf because it was offensive and that he could only wear

the scarf outside of school. The student's mother met with the assistant principal and counselor. She received an apology from the assistant principal and was told that the order had come from the principal's office. The principal later called the student's mother and said that it was a "bad judgement call" and that she was "trying to keep the school safe" and apologized. As the student had previously experienced anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim discrimination from both peers and administrators, CAIR-Georgia reached out to the principal. After receiving an unsatisfactory response, CAIR-Georgia and the student's mother filed a Title VI complaint with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Eventually, both the student's mother and the school agreed to mediation. The school agreed to the following terms: The principal will make either a written apology to the student or an oral apology in the presence of either the Assistant Principal or a counselor for treating the student differently for wearing a scarf with the Palestinian flag on it. The school would also retain a third party to conduct training for District Administrators and the principal on the prohibition of race and national origin discrimination under The Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Georgia: A middle school student was given access to a breakroom to perform Zuhur prayer. Other Muslim students began to join her and use this designated prayer space. In April the student was told that she and the other Muslim students would not be allowed to use the space anymore. According to the report CAIR-Georgia received, a teacher alleged that students were "playing around and taking advantage of the time they were away from class." As a result, the principal announced that no one would be allowed to leave the classroom for religious reasons and students could wait to pray when they got home. The student's father had reached out to the principal multiple times during the school year and during summer break and received no answer from the principal. In July, CAIR-Georgia sent a letter to the principal outlining the father's concerns, the importance of performing prayer, and the school's obligation to allow students to practice their religion. Upon receiving the letter, the new Principal reached out to the father and spoke to him about his concerns. The principal agreed to finding a place for the students to pray during school.

West Virginia: Morgantown High School agreed to restore to Muslim students an adequate place to pray congregational Friday prayers on campus, as they had in previous years. In a letter to the school, CAIR wrote, "The school district's representatives have refused to explain to us why Muslim students can no longer pray in the space they had prayed in for years without incident. Even if their original location is no longer feasible, the students have communicated with several teachers who are willing to volunteer their empty classrooms during prayer time, which coincides with their lunch period. The closet-sized space district representatives have offered the students is unacceptable and unworkable due to the nature of the prayer." Muslim students at the school were subsequently informed they will have an adequate place to pray Friday congregational (Jummah) prayers on campus. With CAIR and the community's intervention, this ends a year-long struggle to secure appropriate space for the several dozen Muslim students at the school.

Michigan: CAIR-Michigan joined with other attorneys to file a lawsuit on behalf of students, alum, and one student organization alleging that the University of Michigan has a pattern and practice of violating pro-Palestine student protesters' Constitutional rights to free speech, expression, due process, and equal protection. According to the filing, "For decades, members of the University of Michigan community have raised their voices and advocated, on campus, at demonstrations, rallies, teach-ins, marches, strikes, sit-ins, pickets, and educational events for many important social and political issues. Dating back to the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War era, the University maintained a consistent policy of not imposing disciplinary proceedings or suspensions on students and student groups who engage in peaceful protest. While the manner of expressing speech has not changed, the University's response to pro-Palestine speech has dramatically changed. The University of Michigan has departed from its own celebration of on-campus protest to instead attack, repress, and punish student protesters expressing their support for Palestinian human rights and calling on the University to divest over $6 billion implicated in apartheid and the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Plaintiffs allege that the University is taking unprecedented action to selectively target students and the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter with disciplinary procedures to punish protesters for their advocacy in a naked attempt to undermine the student movement for Palestine by creating a culture of fear, repression, and silence on campus."[22]

Georgia: CAIR-Georgia, attorneys Sarah Gerwig and Samantha Hamilton, individual University of Georgia (UGA) students, and the organization Georgia Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) (formerly UGA Students for Justice in Palestine) filed a Title VI federal civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), demanding an immediate investigation into UGA's extreme differential treatment of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students, students perceived to be Palestinian, and students associated with or advocating for Palestinians.[23] The complaint details how SJP and students associated with the organization had been the target of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and Islamophobic harassment on campus that has escalated since October 2023. UGA did not take meaningful steps to end the harassment, prevent it from occurring, or remedy its effects, according to the complaint. Instead, UGA reinforced the hostile anti-Palestinian environment. Examples of this behavior cited in the complaint include the UGA Police Department ("UGAPD") arresting 9 students in April who were peacefully protesting Israel's genocide of Palestinians, summarily suspending them without proper notice (some given less than 10 minutes), locking them out of their on-campus housing, terminating their on-campus employment, instructing their professors to call 911 on them should they be seen on campus, and prohibiting the students from taking exams or submitting papers online. Several students were barred from attending their own graduations. The complaint also details University President Jere Morehead and UGA administrators repeatedly ignoring meeting requests from SJP students, as well as ignoring SJP students' concerns when they complained of threats to their physical

safety. Other allegations include UGA exaggerating risks to the student body during student peaceful protests, and engaging in McCarthyist witch hunts by targeting student organizations and individual students perceived to be associating with Palestinians, even after SJP dissolved as a UGA student organization out of serious safety concerns.

Employment Discrimination

California: In August, a federal judge issued a court order stating that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) must temporarily stop enforcing its no-beard policy for Correctional Officers (COs) who ask to wear facial hair for religious reasons, such as Sikhs and Muslims. The order also states that the department cannot retaliate against officers seeking accommodation for their religious beliefs.[24] One of the named plaintiffs, Mubashar Ali, is a client represented jointly by CAIR's Sacramento Valley/Central California (SV/CC) office and the ACLU of Northern California. Ali was compelled to shave his beard, which he grew due to his sincerely held religious belief, for nearly 18 months. The Sacramento Bee had previously reported on court filings that read, "To keep his job and provide for his family, Ali began shaving his beard after this incident and continues to shave under duress .... [t] he emotional toll of dishonoring his religion through shaving makes Ali feel that CDCR has taken away his identity."[25] Under the temporary court order, Mr. Ali has been able to stop shaving his beard while the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigates whether

In December, CAIR-California and Legal Aid at Work filed a complaint with the California Labor Commissioner on behalf of Lauren Gaw, a registered nurse who was unlawfully terminated for displaying stickers on her water bottle supporting Palestinian liberation. Source: CAIR-San Diego.

the CDCR has violated the officers' rights to reasonable accommodations.

Washington: CAIR-Washington called on Microsoft to rehire and apologize to two employees who were reportedly fired for organizing a vigil for Palestinians killed in the far-right Israeli government's genocide in Gaza at the company's headquarters. Those Microsoft employees were allegedly fired several hours after the vigil they organized at Microsoft's head office in Redmond, Washington. The fired employees say the event was like other Microsoft-sanctioned campaigns for people in need. Microsoft said it "cannot provide specific details" about the firings.[26]

New York: A nurse at NYU Langone was allegedly unjustly fired after expressing compassion for Palestinians in an award acceptance speech.[27] On May 7th, during National Nurses Week, NYU Langone presented Hesen Jabr with the Sebastian Brun Passionate Care Award, honoring her for her exceptional, compassionate care for those suffering perinatal loss. During her acceptance speech, Jabr briefly discussed her identity as a Palestinian-Muslim American and expressed her pain at the inability to help grieving mothers who have lost children in Gaza due to the ongoing genocide. On May 22nd, the first shift back after receiving her award, she was reportedly called into an impromptu meeting with NYU Langone administration discussing NYU's dissatisfaction with her comments. Jabr was subsequently fired at the end of her shift and was escorted off the premises by a plain-clothes police officer.

Minnesota: CAIR-Minnesota and the legal team of the Law Office of Jordan S. Kushner announced administrative legal actions taken against University of Minnesota for allegedly firing a Muslim employee who expressed support for Palestine through her personal social media pages. According to media reports, Mashal Sherzad asserts she "was terminated after she made a private Facebook post of her participating in a pro-Palestine protest in Spain late last year."[28]

**"I was character assassinated for being anti-genocide of any people, of any background, at any point in time."
- Mashal Sherzad, whose lawsuit against the University of Minnesota alleges she was fired for participating in a protest against the Gaza genocide.**

"I was character assassinated for being anti-genocide of any people, of any background, at any point in time." - Mashal Sherzad, whose lawsuit against the University of Minnesota alleges she was fired for participating in a protest against the Gaza genocide.

Michigan: CAIR-Michigan announced that it had reached a settlement in its employment discrimination lawsuit filed against U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on behalf of a Muslim employee who alleged he was retaliated against with unfair discipline after complaining that he was denied a religious accommodation to maintain a beard in accordance with his sincerely-held religious beliefs. Earlier in the year, CAIR-Michigan filed a lawsuit on behalf of a Muslim American CBP Officer after he complained that he was unfairly disciplined resulting in loss of wages and benefits after complaining that he was denied a religious accommodation by his supervisor to maintain a beard in accordance with his Islamic faith.[29]

Virginia: CAIR announced that a Muslim security officer's request to keep a fist-length beard was accommodated in his workplace. The security guard contacted CAIR after his accommodation request was denied and he was forced to trim down his beard in contradiction to his sincere religious beliefs. CAIR Legal Defense Fund stepped in, providing legal representation for this individual. The team successfully settled with the company, obtaining the religious accommodation of a fist-sized beard length on his behalf. This win ensures that this Muslim man and others can maintain religiously compliant facial hair without risking their job security.

Oklahoma: In a recorded exchange, a Muslim man arrived at a scheduled job interview only to be told that he could not proceed in the hiring process due to his beard. He offered to trim his beard and to wear beard nets, purchased at his own expense, but the company refused. CAIR-Oklahoma intervened and worked with the EEOC to help this client achieve a sizable settlement, in addition to the company changing their "no facial hair" policy to end discrimination against Muslims.[30]

Illinois: CAIR-Chicago secured a $475,000 settlement on behalf of its client, Ramtin Sabet, a former police officer for the City of North Chicago since 2007, who faced relentless harassment and belittling from his co-workers based on his religion (Islam) and national origin (Iranian).[31] The hostile work environment created by constant Islamophobic comments, insults, and ridicule ultimately led to Mr. Sabet's termination in 2016. His meticulous documentation of these incidents, including insulting events, derogatory statements about him and his family, and frequent Islamophobic comments, became crucial evidence of the toxic atmosphere he endured. Mr. Sabet's efforts to address the harassment by bringing complaints to his supervisor were ignored or met with adverse consequences such as being denied promotions and training opportunities. The investigation into his complaints was turned against him, culminating in his wrongful termination by the police department.

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FBI Interrogation

New Jersey: An FBI special agent contacted a Rutgers University student after the student posted a Quranic verse on social media. The verse, "And never think Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays their punishment for a day when their eyes will stare in terror,"[32] refers to Judgement Day. CAIR-New Jersey believes that the special agent's investigation was the result of a frivolous report to the FBI about the social media post. The student met with the agent. The student reports facing leading questions and subtle accusations of terrorism. The student also reported being asked about his lack of support for Israel. Finally, the student was told to keep this meeting secret from his parents. This red flag caused him to reach out to CAIR-New Jersey, which reviewed his rights with him and instructed him to let the special agent know he was now legally represented to prevent any further communications. The agent ceased contacting the student.

First Amendment

Massachusetts: As part of its 2025 budget process, the Massachusetts legislature quietly added a non-budgetary provision to create a state commission on antisemitism. The budget amendment, which was not subject to public debate, was reportedly drafted in conjunction with several pro-Israel groups. One of commission's goals appears to be

In May, GWU students, parents, faculty, and alumni held a press conference at CAIR's headquarters, condemning President Ellen Grandberg for endangering students and prompting a police raid on the anti-genocide encampment. Source: CAIR-National.

recommending new policies or laws that could penalize, and perhaps even criminalize, criticism of Israel's on-going genocide in Gaza. CAIR-Massachusetts urged the Governor to veto the budget amendment because antisemitism, like any other form of oppression, must be addressed within a framework that recognizes all forms of racism and discrimination as interrelated and equally harmful. The Governor signed the proposal into law as part of the 2025 budget and the commission was created.[33] As part of an interfaith coalition, CAIR-Massachusetts then met with the various governmental bodies tasked with appointing members to the new commission. Coalition members asked them to appoint people who reflected the true range of opinion within the Jewish community on Palestinian human rights. Unfortunately, all non-governmental appointees represent apparently pro-Israel advocacy groups, but the commission also includes members who understand the First Amendment implications of penalizing pro-Palestinian views. The interfaith coalition is now meeting with individual Commission members and reports that the legislative leadership has agreed to allow testimony from the coalition, as the coalition's goal is to add a perspective that has been excluded and to affect the commission's eventual recommendations.

Ohio: An effort to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in Ohio Law was defeated after a coalition of free speech groups opposed it. In our 2024 civil rights report CAIR reported, The "'Working Definition of Antisemitism,' adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, expands the definition of antisemitism to also include critiques of Israeli policies, including Israeli settler colonialism, occupation of the West Bank, its apartheid leveraged against Palestinians, and the ethnic cleansing and oppression of the Palestinian people." At the time CAIR also wrote, "the original drafter of the IHRA definition himself called it a 'working definition' and testified to the U.S. Congress that if government bodies 'enshrine this definition into law, outside groups will try and suppress – rather than answer – political speech they don't like. The academy, Jewish students, and faculty teaching about Jewish issues, will all suffer.'" [34] CAIR's Ohio offices sent out two action alerts, which resulted in over 2000 emails being sent to representatives in the Ohio State House demanding them to vote no on both SB 297 and HB 315, as well as hundreds of phone calls directed towards the state senators' offices.

In September, CAIR's Maryland office and Palestine Legal held a news conference to announce the filing of a federal lawsuit challenging the University of Maryland College. Source: CAIR-National.

Hate Crime/Hate Incidents

Illinois: Hate crime charges were filed against Alexandra Szustakiewicz, who reportedly attacked a couple at a Panera Bread in Downers Grove over a Palestine hoodie worn by one of the alleged victims.[35] Szustakiewicz was arrested and charged with two hate crime counts and disorderly conduct after verbally and physically attacking a man and his pregnant wife.[36]

Florida: A Florida man attacked a Muslim female U.S. Postal Service worker. In August he was sentenced for that crime. On October 24, 2023, Kenneth Pinkney approached the victim—who was in her Postal Service uniform and operating a marked truck—and tore off her hijab (Islamic head scarf), slapped, and punched her in the face. This attack caused the victim to bleed from her mouth and left scratches on her face. Pinkney also attempted to grab her leg as she tried to get back into the USPS truck. Pinkney was charged with battery and a hate crime based on "prejudicial comments on the victim's ancestry, religion, and national origin." Pinkney, of Fort Lauderdale, pleaded guilty to assaulting a federal employee. The case included a sentencing enhancement based on a finding that hate was a motivating factor. Pinkney was ordered to serve 37 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release.

North Carolina: According to police, David Arthur Lawrence was charged after a family member reported he had made devices believed to be bombs and had made the threats to target Muslims.[37]

Texas: Elizabeth Wolf was indicted "on attempted capital murder and causing bodily injury to a child,"[38] after allegedly attempting to drown two Muslim children. A hate crime enhancement was added to the indictment which notes that "Wolf targeted the children because they were 'Muslims or persons of Middle Eastern descent.'" The alleged incident occurred on Sunday, May 19th, at the family's apartment complex swimming pool area.

"Tell her I will kill her, and I will kill her whole family." – Elizabeth Wolf, as police were taking her away after she allegedly attempted to drown two Muslim children

Mrs. H, the mother, who was wearing hijab (Islamic head scarf) and modest swimwear, was watching her children in the shallow end of the pool when a white woman entered the swimming pool area. The alleged attacker reportedly approached the mother with racist interrogations then jumped into the swimming pool and grabbed the children, taking them to the deep end of the pool to allegedly drown them. The mother reported jumping into the pool to save her children. According to the mother, her 6-year-old-son was able to escape, but her petite 3-year-old daughter was unable. The alleged attacker snatched off the mother's head scarf and used it to beat the mother as well as kicking her to keep her away while forcing her daughter's head underwater.

Mrs. H stated that an African American man helped rescue her daughter from the attacker and more people gathered and witnessed. Cuffed and taken away by the police officer, the attacker reportedly shouted to a bystander woman who was calming the mother down "Tell her I will kill her, and I will kill her whole family."

Pennsylvania: On October 22, the Department of Justice (DoJ)[39] announced, "Yaniv Gola, 51, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Kai N. Scott to 16 months' incarceration followed by three years of supervised release for interstate communication of threats." Using technology to mask his phone number, Gola had reportedly called Muslims and Jews threatening to injure, rape and kill them. According to the DoJ release during one call Gola said, "I want to put a bullet in your head … You f***ing Muslims."

In early 2024, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad with CAIR legal staff outside the U.S. Supreme Court, where CAIR argued a federal watchlist case. Source: CAIR-National.

New York: The Suffolk County District Attorney announced that, "Brendan Marchetti, 35, of Huntington, was arrested for Criminal Mischief in the Second Degree, as a Hate Crime, and other related charges, for threatening to kill four Muslim men and then ramming his vehicle into theirs."[40]
The 35-year-old suspect attempted to strike the men's car twice before the police were called. CAIR-New York played a key role in securing these charges by reaching out to the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and emphasizing the severity of the situation.

California: In March, CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area and law firms Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Schoenberger and Palo Alto Legal Group announced the filing of a lawsuit against Max Steiner on behalf of three Monterey County residents. These individuals were confronted and reportedly assaulted by Steiner while exercising their right of free expression. The incident occurred on October 12, 2023, as the residents, three young women, including a 13-year-old girl, were using sticks and shrubs to create a "Free Gaza" sign along a sand embankment in Sand City, a location often used by residents to write messages visible from the highway. Their action was abruptly disrupted when Steiner confronted the women.[41] On November 16, 2023, Monterey County Now quoted the father of one of the victims as saying, "It was also fueled by Islamophobia and prejudice against Muslims, specifically Palestinians. It's disheartening to witness such hatred." The lawsuit alleges that Steiner escalated the situation by verbally assaulting the women with accusations of terrorism, violently dismantling their sign, and threatening them—culminating in an assault the minor, whom he grabbed and whose cellphone he threw and shattered. The lawsuit outlines multiple causes of action, including negligence, violations of the Bane Act and Ralph Act, assault, and battery, reflecting the severity of the defendant's actions. These legal claims underscore the women's right to express their views without fear of violence or bodily harm and the responsibility of individuals to respect these rights.

Michigan: Michael Shapiro pled guilty to "federal charges for threatening an American Muslim organization."[42] According to the Department of Justice, Shaprio "placed three separate phone calls to CAIR's office located in Canton, Michigan, and left voicemails containing the following threats:
"December 8, 2023: 'I'm going to kill you bastards. I'm going to kill you bastards.'
"December 14, 2023: 'I'm going to kill you m****r f*****g bastards. Muslims! I'm going to kill you m****r f*****s. I'm going to kill you! I'm going to kill you! I'm going to kill you!'
"December 15, 2023: 'You're a violent people. Why do you come to America? Why do you come to Europe? M***** f******. You're violent. You're killers. You're rapists. I'm going to kill you m****r f*****s!'[43]

California: CAIR-San Francisco Bay Area welcomed hate crime charges brought against a 57-year-old South San Francisco man who allegedly attacked a group of demonstrators who were calling on the South San Francisco City Council to adopt a Gaza ceasefire resolution. The man reportedly shouted, "Bomb bomb Palestine. Bomb bomb Palestine," at the demonstrators outside South San Francisco's Civic Center. Police say the man was arrested and is facing charges of battery, threats and hate speech.
One demonstrator told local a local media outlet: "He verbally assaults everyone in our

group. With me, he elbowed me in the face, he spit on a friend of mine, he pushed another friend of mine and another friend got her head bumped into."[44]

Wisconsin: Two women plead guilty for assaulting three Muslim women wearing hijabs (Islamic headscarves) in Milwaukee's Cathedral Square Park. One of the perpetrators pleaded guilty to felony substantial battery (hate crime), disorderly conduct and misdemeanor bail jumping, while the other pleaded guilty to two counts of misdemeanor battery (hate crime). The incident took place on July 30, 2023, when the victims were picnicking in Cathedral Square Park.[45] The attackers approached them, reportedly without provocation, asked where they were from, punched them and put one of them in a headlock. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office arrested the attackers shortly after the incident.[46] In collaboration with the Islamic Society of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, CAIR wrote to District Attorney John Chisholm to request the addition of hate crime charges.

Georgia: A man allegedly stalked and harassed two Muslim women who were wearing the hijab (Islamic head scarf) in downtown Alpharetta, Georgia.[47] The two Muslim women were reportedly peacefully protesting, holding a Palestinian flag and sign, when they were approached by the middle-aged man who began to hurl verbal abuse at them. Video shows the man made deeply disturbing Islamophobic comments, used racist rhetoric, and questioned if the women had "guns" and if they will "shoot people." He then began stalking and following them while continuously exclaiming, "let's shoot some people while we are having a concert" and "let's throw a grenade and a bomb shell while we are having a concert" as the two women walked away from him. The two women were speaking a mix of English and Arabic to each other. The women stopped and asked the harasser to walk away, telling them he was "harassing" them, yet he continued to follow and film them. A female public bystander then intervened, coming in between the harasser and the two Muslim women. The man continued to follow and record the two Muslim women as they walked to their car. The bystander stayed with the Muslim women to ensure their safety as long as she could.

Washington, DC: Hate crime charges were reportedly filed against suspects Chad Wiley and Stephen Stenberg for the harassment and alleged assault of wedding guests at a Muslim woman's wedding in late June. On June 22, a Muslim family held the wedding of their daughter at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. CAIR was told that around 11:30 p.m., as two guests wearing keffiyehs left the wedding and exited the hotel, two white male individuals walked past them towards the hotel entrance. One of the males reportedly brushed against the shoulder of one of the guests and yelled "F*** Palestine." One of the two guests reportedly responded verbally: "I don't think my cousins in Gaza would be happy to hear that." CAIR was told that the two suspects allegedly responded with more vulgar, anti-Palestinian comments including "wishing death upon Gazans." CAIR was told that four African American women then intervened to help de-escalate the situation. Despite their efforts, the two males reportedly started walking towards the guests. One of the guests, telling CAIR he was concerned for the women's safety, offered: "If you want to talk, let's talk about it." At that point, one of the males allegedly wrapped his hands

around one of the guests' neck and began choking him. The guest reportedly dislocated his thumb trying to extricate himself from the alleged attacker's choking maneuver, who proceeded to reportedly punch the guest in the face resulting in a black eye. As the guests tried to get to safety, one of the alleged attackers reportedly shouted, "NYPD motherf****." The guest was reportedly punched a second time as one of the male suspects reportedly demanded, "Give me that f****** keffiyeh." As the two guests tried to get to safety, a passerby driving past them reportedly screamed, "Leave them alone!" to which one of the male suspects reportedly replied, "I'm going to f***** bash your window." Both male suspects were taken into police custody at the hotel.

Housing Discrimination

Minnesota: Madinah Lakes is a Muslim-friendly development project proposal, including a mosque and homes to cater to a broad demographic to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all. Despite efforts to engage constructively with the city and address concerns raised during public hearings, the council's decision to halt the process is viewed by many as discriminatory and Islamophobic as well as a departure from established procedures.[48] While Councilmember Chris Lyden rejected accusations that the city is trying to prevent the project's construction on the basis of faith,[49] the councilmember reportedly responded to a hate-filled, anti-Muslim email which made claims such as "Islam hates us" and asked the

In April, 700 American Muslim delegates from 25 states traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with more than 200 congressional offices in the U.S. House and Senate over three days. Source: CAIR-National.

councilmember to put "the kibosh on the Muslim development" by exclaiming that it, "Might be the best email [he has] ever received," and thanked the individual who sent it, suggesting an Islamophobic bias.[50] Councilmember Lyden reportedly downplayed the seriousness of his actions and defended his response, after which the city council voted 3-1 in favor of censuring him. A lawsuit filed in September highlights other examples of anti-Muslim racism in the proceedings.[51] This includes quoting "the opposition's leader, Luke Walters," saying "If you are choosing to live near your religious building, it goes to say that you're probably on the more fervent side of religious. You're probably a bit more conservative. So when [Plaintiffs] talk about welcoming, I'm sure that would be [Plaintiffs'] intent, but human nature is such that [non Muslim] people would not want to necessarily buy a home and insert themselves into a community where they feel they're going to have conservative religious [Muslim] neighbors. You start to think about would they be comfortable with certain modes of dress, alcohol, all kinds of lifestyle choices that you take for granted in mixed communities, you would wonder how people would necessarily feel welcome."

Incarceree Rights

Georgia: CAIR and CAIR-Georgia announced the resolution of a significant religious accommodation case against the Dekalb County Sheriff's Office, securing a $95,000 settlement on behalf of their client, Norman Simmonds. Simmonds, who has been detained without conviction at the Dekalb County Jail for two-and-a-half years, faced relentless and irrational denials of even the simplest requests, including requests for individual timepieces or a visible clock in the housing unit so he and other Muslims could know when to pray and fast. When Simmonds requested a certified halal (Islamically-appropriate) or even kosher diet, the jail refused Simmonds the certified kosher meals it was already providing for Jewish detainees. Instead, it placed him and other Muslims on a vegan diet that provided an estimated average of 400-700 calories per day during Ramadan and no more than an estimated 1,400 calories any other day. After nearly two years of litigation, Dekalb County Sheriff Stacey Maddox recently agreed to hang clocks in every housing unit, provide certified kosher meals to Muslims who request them, allow congregational prayer in the housing units, and authorize outside donations of prayer rugs. At the time this report was written, claims remain pending against Trinity Services Group and Aramark Correctional Services, the food service contractors who provided—or altogether failed to provide—the nutritionally deficient meals.

Texas: The Travis County Sheriff's Office implemented policy changes allowing female Muslim detainees to keep their hijab on for photos and during the booking process, adding privacy precautions during the search process, and giving detainees access to long sleeves clothing due to their sincerely held religious beliefs. The policy was changed following CAIR-Austin's intervention after anti-genocide student protesters were arrested and reportedly denied many of their constitutional rights in April. At that time, CAIR-Austin had condemned the violation of female detainees' constitutional rights and asked for policies reforming and enforcing, providing cultural competence training for officers, and investigating of the alleged incidents.[52]

CAIR-Austin had multiple meetings and visits with the county office and senior chaplain after violations of religious rights of arrested students, especially female Muslim students.[53]

Maryland: The Prince George's County Department of Corrections instituted a new policy authorizing incarcerated Muslims at the institution to hold consolidated congregational Friday (Jummah) prayer services. The development comes following many discussions and negotiations by the Maryland Muslim Prisoner Project (MMPP), which was launched in 2021 by Muslim chaplains serving prison populations, CAIR's Maryland office, the Prince George's County Muslim Council (PGCMC) and ICNA Council for Social Justice. In May, Prince George's County Department of Corrections Director Terrence Clark, Chief of Inmate Services Division Dr. Gregory Bearstop and other corrections administrative staff met with Muslim chaplains, CAIR and PGCMC to discuss implementing the new policy, as well as other steps being taken to improve religious support services for incarcerated Muslims at the Upper Marlboro facility. Muslims make up approximately a quarter of the estimated 800 incarcerees at the facility.

Law Enforcement Encounters

Delaware: Attorneys from CAIR-Philadelphia and Jacobs & Crumplar, P.A. announced their lawsuit against the University of Delaware and its police department for the June 2023 unlawful arrest of Mohammed Sanogo. Sanogo was unlawfully and violently arrested on June 15, 2023, by the University of Delaware (UD) Police officers following the June 15 graduation ceremony held by Christina School District at the UD Newark Campus. Reporting by USA Today indicates that Sanogo and other Muslims opted to pray in a parking lot following the graduation ceremony. After prayer, a police officer approached them and was acting "aggressively."[54] Following advocacy by CAIR-Philadelphia, Delaware Muslim community, and continued questions raised by the Christina School District, the Delaware Attorney General dismissed the charges against Mohammed Sanogo.

"The carefully crafted and edited video released by [University of Delaware Police Department] has led to more questions than it answers. There is clearly someone speeding through the parking lot with someone hanging out of the window at some point, but it was neither Mohammad nor his car. The edited video shows dishonesty of UD to piece together an unrelated party's reckless actions as a reason behind the decision to arrest Mohammad." - Dr. Naveed Baqir, a Christina School District Board member in a statement provided to the Newark Post

In January, CAIR-Chicago Staff Attorney Joe Milburn delivered a Know Your Rights workshop during a packed open mic night including artists, direct aid groups, legal advocates, and Palestinian voices in Chicago Ridge, IL. Source: CAIR-Chicago.

"The carefully crafted and edited video released by [University of Delaware Police Department] has led to more questions than it answers. There is clearly someone speeding through the parking lot with someone hanging out of the window at some point, but it was neither Mohammad nor his car. The edited video shows dishonesty of UD to piece together an unrelated party's reckless actions as a reason behind the decision to arrest Mohammad," wrote Dr. Naveed Baqir, a Christina School District Board member in a statement provided to the Newark Post

Ohio: CAIR's Cleveland and Northern Ohio office called for an independent investigation of an alleged police assault on a peaceful anti-genocide protester outside a Cuyahoga County Council meeting in August. According to the victim, Ruby Darwish, she was exiting the building and a police officer passed by her, turned around shoved her with significant force, and then another officer immediately grabbed her by the neck and slammed her against the wall.[55] A civilian reportedly intervened by putting himself in between her and the police officer.[56] The victim was rushed to an urgent care for her injuries where she was sent to the emergency room for examination.

Other Government Discrimination

Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters issued a press statement saying, “Effective immediately, all Oklahoma schools are required to incorporate the Bible, which includes the Ten Commandments, as an instructional support into the curriculum across specified grade levels.”[57] CAIR-Oklahoma condemned the move as a clear violation of the Constitution’s Establishment Clause, and only stands to further marginalize religious minorities in public schools. The civil rights organization also called it a dangerous encroachment on the separation of church and state by supporting the teaching of a particular interpretation of the Bible as truth.

Other Discrimination

California: Following the onset of the latest round of Middle East violence an established physician, who is also well known in the community and who has amassed a considerable social media following with over 250k followers on Instagram, was subjected to a targeted smear campaign by an Instagram account that notoriously targets Muslim and pro-Palestinian professionals and physicians. The client's pro-Palestinian posts were targeted and reposted, including images of the client and information regarding her employment. The account also created a profile link asking people to report the physician to the California Medical Board. CAIR-Greater Los Angeles Area represented the client and sent a demand letter to the account, warning them about engaging in cyber harassment and defamation and demanding that they cease and desist their unlawful conduct. As a result of their advocacy, the account removed their direct profile link, asking people to report the physician. They have not posted any additional content targeting our client since.

Arizona: Arizona State University (ASU) professor Jonathan Yudelman allegedly harassed and assaulted a Muslim woman in a hijab during his participation in a pro-Israel protest near campus. According to witness accounts, the Muslim woman was allegedly subjected to derogatory remarks and harassment by the ASU professor. CAIR called for ASU to investigate the incident and take appropriate action, including termination. On May 8, the Phoenix New Times reported that video of the incident resulted in “widespread outcry and the school placing Yudelman on leave.” The Arizona State Press quoted ASU President Michael Crow’s statement noting Yudelman “is no longer permitted to be on campus and will never teach here again.”[58]

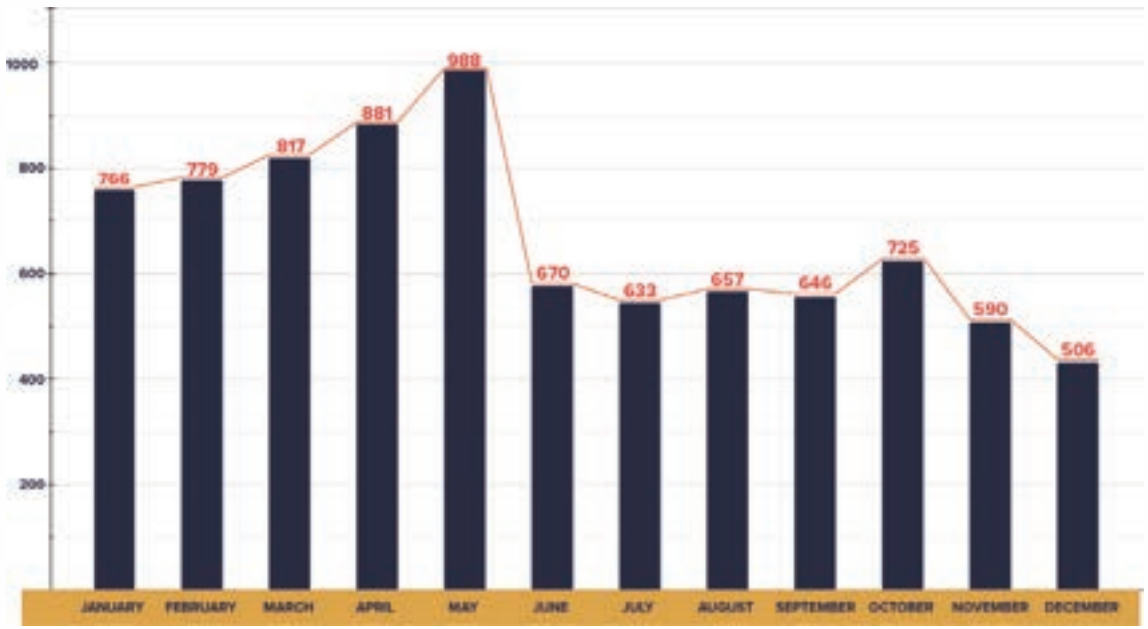
Arizona State University. Source: Ismael Paramo (@ismaelparamo) on unsplash.com

New Hampshire: CAIR secured a full apology for a Muslim family negligently served pork at a well-established New England restaurant chain. The family asked staff whether a particular food item contained pork. The staff dismissed the family's inquiries three different times and simply told them the items did not contain pork to end their inquiries. Unfortunately, the family discovered the items contained pork upon eating them. The family reported this matter to CAIR, and CAIR wrote a letter to the restaurant chain's senior management. Management has since apologized to the family and will revisit the training they offer to their staff per CAIR's insistence.

Florida: In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Florida state Sen. Randy Fine appeared to threaten Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), both Muslims. He wrote: "The 'Hebrew Hammer' is coming. @RashidaTlaib and @IlhanMN might consider leaving before I get there. #BombsAway."[59] CAIR urged that state's GOP to eject him from the party and called on state and federal law enforcement authorities to pursue a criminal investigation into Fine's threat.[60] CAIR also called on the United States Capitol Police to step up protection for the congresswomen. Earlier in the year, CAIR and CAIR-Florida called for the Florida legislature to censure then state Rep. Fine after he posted an anti-Muslim tweet celebrating the murder of Turkish American human rights activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi and appeared to call for more killing.[61]

In August, CAIR successfully concludes 9th annual Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium (MYLS) Source: CAIR-National.

2024 Complaints by Month



Special Sections

The following sections highlight key developments in the struggle to secure equal social opportunities and equal protection under the law for American Muslims and other communities during 2024.

Hostile Campus Climate: Administrators Use State Force, University Discipline, and Policies Restricting Expressive Activity; CAIR Launches Unhostile Campus Campaign

When people feel unheard, they protest. Like the historic student protests against segregation, the Vietnam War, and South African apartheid, the recent sit-ins and other protests launched by college students across America were overwhelmingly peaceful, respectful, and diverse—often led by Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish students engaged in the long American tradition of peaceful civil disobedience.

Columbia University students protesting Israel's human rights atrocities in Gaza established an on-campus encampment on April 17. This action gave the already robust campus protest movement national visibility. According to researchers at Princeton University, 95 percent of campus demonstrations occurring between October 7 and May 12 were peaceful, with "no reports of encampment protesters engaging in physical violence or destructive activity."[62]

Instead of listening to students and addressing their concerns in a meaningful way, many university administrators resorted to state force, university discipline, and policies restricting expressive activity on campus.

In May, CAIR-Los Angeles Executive Director Hussam Ayloush spoke at a press conference to address the attacks on students participating in an anti-genocide encampment at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Source: CAIR-Los Angeles.

Instead of listening to students and addressing their concerns in a meaningful way, many university administrators resorted to state force, university discipline, and policies restricting expressive activity on campus.

In May, the US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), CAIR, and the Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA) encouraged criminal defense attorneys willing to represent college students facing criminal charges for peacefully protesting the Gaza genocide to sign up for a "Student-Lawyer Campus Legal Defense Initiative," an online database that CAIR and MLFA used to connect students with attorneys.[63] By July the New York Times reported that 3,100 students had been arrested, that most faced charges of trespassing or disturbing the peace, and that many of the charges were dropped.[64]

Also in May, CAIR published "Hostile: How Universities Target Anti-Genocide Protestors While Enabling Anti-Palestinian Racism and Islamophobia."[65] The report's authors found that, "Rather than engage in uncomfortable conversation, a fundamental value in higher education, universities have chosen police batons and tear gas." The report's authors also stated, "It is urgent that university administrators act immediately to reform their approach [to student protestors], which has put students in danger and threatened the very existence of the university as an institution for free speech and discussion."

In July, CAIR reported, "Education discrimination incidents spiked in May as student encampments urging universities to take an anti-genocide stand dominated media headlines. The experience of students and employees during this cycle of anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian hate remain the standout trends compared to past cycles."[66]

By August, seeing years of data suggesting Islamophobia is often most problematic in educational settings, CAIR launched its Unhostile Campus Campaign, a project aimed at fostering a campus environment where Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students, faculty, and staff opposing the genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza enjoy free speech and academic freedom and are not subjected to state force or university discipline due to their viewpoints.

During and in the wake of the student encampments, university administrators began implementing changes to expressive activity policies, implementing restrictions to the time, place, and manner of protest. Journalist Odeya Rosenband documented a number of these changes with at least 14 universities "banning or restricting encampments and other protests.[67] For example, Indiana University banned protests within 25 feet of university buildings. The University of South Florida banned protests after 5 p.m. Others

suspended student groups—often local Students for Justice in Palestine or Jewish Voice for Peace groups.

Writing in *Higher Education*, Radhika Sainaith observed, “Universities, public and private, are bombarding students with reminders on time, place and manner restrictions—First Amendment parlance that is typically used to ensure that the state only restrict speech in a viewpoint-neutral manner, but that has instead been wielded like sledgehammers to limit protest activity and punish deviance after colleges have supposedly neutrally amended their policies to limit the exact type of speech activity used by pro-Palestinian activists.”[68] In August, The American Association of University Professors released a statement saying in part, “The recent proliferation of these new restrictive policies seems to be an attempt to appease politicians who are calling for university administrators to use a heavy hand against faculty and student protestors.”[69]

Florida Governor Ron Desantis’ much publicized order to ban a pro-Palestinian group turned out to be political grandstanding.

CAIR’s legal team filed several critical actions in support of student and faculty protestors. The following examples illustrate these filings but do not represent a comprehensive list. Florida Governor Ron Desantis’ much publicized order to ban a pro-Palestinian group turned out to be political grandstanding.[70] On Oct. 24, 2023 Florida’s Chancellor of the State University System Board of Governors Ray Rodrigues, acting at the behest of Governor DeSantis, ordered all Students for Justice in Palestine organizations disbanded. CAIR subsequently filed suit on behalf of the University of South Florida chapter. The ACLU represented the University of Florida chapter. In January, CAIR attorney Justin Sadowsky delivered clear and effective arguments against Gov. DeSantis over his attempt to shut down the student groups. Florida’s lawyers barely even tried to defend the merits of his unconstitutional decree. By February Fox News journalist Danielle Wallace reported that Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker denied the actions requested in the lawsuit “essentially because nothing has been done to follow through with the directive and the groups are still active.” In his ruling, Walker wrote, "In short, the record demonstrates that neither deactivation nor criminal investigation is imminent. Instead, this Court finds that no actions have been taken in pursuit of deactivation under the Chancellor’s memorandum."[71] Walker referred to Desantis’ original order as nothing more than “someone cloaked with great power mak[ing] coercive statements."

On March 27, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed Executive Order No. GA-44.[72] The Order targeted student advocates for Palestine and directed universities to punish students and organizations that were critical of Israel’s ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. CAIR filed a lawsuit in May on behalf of Students for Justice in Palestine at the University of Houston, Students for Justice in Palestine at the University of Texas at

Dallas, the Palestine Solidarity Committee at the University of Texas, and the Democratic Socialists of America. In October, a Federal court denied Texas and the Defendant Universities' motion to dismiss in large part, allowing the students' substantive claims to move forward. In holding that the students "are likely to succeed on their claim," the court found that "GA-44-compliant university policies impose impermissible viewpoint discrimination that chills speech in violation of the First Amendment."

On April 5, 2024, CAIR-Georgia in conjunction with Palestine Legal, filed a Title VI complaint with the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) against Emory University on behalf of the members of the Emory Students for Justice in Palestine (ESJP). The complaint demanded an immediate investigation into the six months of discrimination Arab, Palestinian, and Muslim students, faculty, and staff on campus. On April 25, 2024, Emory students, faculty, and staff participated in a peaceful encampment protest in solidarity with Palestine on the Emory Quad. The protest was broken up by the Atlanta Police Department and Emory PD with tasers, tear gas, and rubber bullets. Students, faculty, and staff were attacked, threatened, and arrested.

On April 26, 2024, CAIR-Georgia, along with other civil rights organizations denounced the police brutality and violent mass arrests at the peaceful protest on the Emory Quad. On May 2, 2024, one week after the encampment protest, OCR opened their investigation into Emory's anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and anti-Palestinian discrimination. CAIR-Georgia interviewed many of the students, faculty, and staff that were harassed or arrested that day and added their experiences to amendment to the original complaint filed. In January 2025,

In September, CAIR-Georgia held a press conference calling on the University of Georgia to drop disciplinary charges for anti-genocide protestors.
Source: CAIR-Georgia.

Reuters reported, “The university agreed to revise its nondiscrimination policies and procedures, including pertaining to protests and a definition of harassment that includes harassment based on actual or perceived shared ancestry. The university also agreed to develop training and surveys while assessing its response to campus protests that erupted last year against U.S. support for Israel's war in Gaza, the Education Department said.”[73]

In September CAIR and Palestine Legal filed a lawsuit on behalf of University of Maryland Students for Justice in Palestine to challenge the university’s decision to cancel the group’s interfaith vigil to honor the lives lost during Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza. The University of Maryland’s decision to cancel the event came after it initially granted SJP permission to hold the vigil, which SJP planned to co-host with Jewish Voice for Peace at the University of Maryland. The University of Maryland canceled the vigil after overwhelming pressure from anti-Palestinian groups and had announced that only university-sponsored “expressive events” would be allowed on campus that day.[74] The University’s decision constituted unlawful viewpoint and content-based discrimination, in violation of the First Amendment. Shortly afterward the United States District Court for the District of Maryland granted the request for a preliminary injunction, allowing the interfaith vigil to proceed.[75] The court ruled that the university’s revocation of the SJP reservation was “clearly neither viewpoint- nor content-neutral,” and that “it came about for reasons that the Constitution simply does not countenance: fear of disruption, and anger of opponents.”

In February, CAIR-Maryland announced the filing of a complaint challenging the suspension and investigation of three Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) teachers for their speech in support of Palestinian human rights. Source: CAIR-National.

Hostile Work Environment

CAIR is preparing a stand-alone report on this subject as it merits individualized attention. We earlier noted that employment discrimination was the highest reported category CAIR received in 2024. The category type is persistently among those highest reported since at least 2014. In its 2016 report on Islamophobia, CAIR noted, "Two studies conducted by the University of Connecticut found that employers 'are demonstrably less likely" to respond to resumes in which the applicant lists a faith affiliation, with Islam being 'far and away' the faith group employers least wanted to engage.[76]

Watchlist: Supreme Court Rules 9-0 Against Government, Seeking Justice for those Impacted by the Federal Watchlist

"The FBI cannot play whack-a-mole with the rights of Muslims. The FBI cannot place innocent Muslims on the No Fly List, only to then block that unconstitutional list from scrutiny by removing those Muslims whenever they file a lawsuit," - CAIR National Deputy Litigation Director Gadeir Abbas, who argued the case for client Yonas Fikre before the Supreme Court on January 8th.

Fikre v. FBI

CAIR welcomed a March U.S. Supreme Court 9-0 ruling allowing the organization's lawsuit challenging the federal No Fly List on behalf of Yonas Fikre to move forward over the government's objection.[77]

"The FBI cannot play whack-a-mole with the rights of Muslims. The FBI cannot place innocent Muslims on the No Fly List, only to then block that unconstitutional list from scrutiny by removing those Muslims whenever they file a lawsuit,"
- CAIR National Deputy Litigation Director Gadeir Abbas, who argued the case for client Yonas Fikre before the Supreme Court on January 8th.

Fikre is an American Muslim who was tortured and imprisoned in the United Arab Emirates at the behest of American officials and then stranded in Sweden because of his status on the No Fly List, after he refused pressure from the FBI to become an informant.

The government took Fikre off the list after CAIR filed suit and tried to argue that Fikre's case was moot, as he was no longer on the list, to avoid the threat of a court ruling declaring the watchlist unconstitutional. The FBI has previously removed over ten CAIR clients from the No Fly List in response to lawsuits filed by the civil rights group.

Then CAIR attorney Hannah Mullen summarized oral arguments before the Supreme Court in a Bloomberg Law Op-Ed:[78]

> "The question before the Supreme Court is simple: Can the government dodge accountability for its actions by reversing itself when facing a lawsuit?
>
> "The answer lies in a bit of jurisprudence called the voluntary cessation doctrine. This doctrine stands for the common-sense principle that, once sued, the government can't escape a court's scrutiny of their illegal actions simply by stopping and promising not to do it again. Instead, the defendant has to make clear that it can't be expected to go back to its old ways.
>
> "During the hearing, it didn't take long for the justices to grasp the fundamental unfairness the government was imposing. Justice Sonia Sotomayor posed a hypothetical: What if our client was listed based on lawful donations he made to a particular mosque that, unknown to him, the FBI had viewed with suspicion?
>
> "Could he be placed back on the No Fly List for making another donation to that same mosque? Yes, the government attorney conceded. The FBI could re-list him again and again for simply associating with people and organizations in his community.
>
> "Other justices were similarly skeptical. Justice Brett Kavanaugh pointed out that it's practically impossible to know whether the government is likely to re-list Fikre because courts are in the dark about what's going on: The government hasn't disclosed either the reasons Fikre was initially listed, or the reasons that he was removed from the list.
>
> "As Justice Neil Gorsuch put it, the government is denying an American citizen—and the courts—the ability to assess the evidence that's being mustered against him, when his fundamental right to travel is at stake.
>
> "Oral argument showed that the justices understand our straightforward argument: The government can't throw Yonas Fikre's case out of court by taking him off the No Fly List without explanation and without any meaningful commitment not to re-list him for the same reasons and by the same procedures."

The Supreme Court rejected the government's argument that lawsuits like Fikre's case are moot. In a unanimous opinion by Justice Gorsuch, the Court explained that the government's declaration provided no assurances he would not be placed back on the list if he repeated whatever behavior the Government thought was grounds to put him on in the first place.

The declaration was silent as to "whether the government might relist him if he does the same or similar things in the future—say, attend a particular mosque or refuse renewed overtures to serve as an informant." So the Government did not prove "that it cannot reasonably be expected to resume its challenged conduct—whether the suit happens to be new or long lingering, and whether the challenged conduct might recur immediately or later at some more propitious moment."

This case marked the first time that CAIR argued directly before the U.S. Supreme Court.[79]

Long v Garland

A CAIR attorney delivered an oral argument in the Eastern District of Virginia on behalf of Saadiq Long, a Muslim from Oklahoma who, after finally being removed from the federal government's No-Fly List, remains on the broader federal terrorism watchlist.[80] Long's placement on the watchlist disrupts both his work and his ability to travel. He is challenging the constitutionality of the watchlist on due process and equal protection grounds. The case is currently on appeal before the 4th circuit.

Kovac v. Wray

In December, CAIR asked the US. Supreme Court to review a Fifth Circuit ruling about the legality of the government's Orwellian watchlist that upended the 'major questions' doctrine. Kovac v. Wray challenges the legality of the federal terrorist watchlist based on the "major questions doctrine." The Supreme Court has explained that when a federal agency claims extraordinarily broad power to infringe on individual liberty that agency must show that Congress expressly authorized that power.

While the District Court agreed that the major questions doctrine applied, it found Congressional authorization for the federal terrorist watchlist based on vague general statements made by Congress regarding the Administrator of TSA and the Director of the FBI's authorization to assess security threats to the air transportation system. On appeal, the Fifth Circuit took a different approach. They ruled that statutory text was unambiguous in its authorization for the watchlist, citing to agency mission statements and Congressional language acknowledging the existence of the watchlist. But the Fifth Circuit could point to no specific language that expressly and affirmatively authorized the watchlist itself. Kovac's Petition for Certiorari asks the Supreme Court to review the Fifth Circuit's decision because the Fifth Circuit's decision effectively eliminates the Major Questions Doctrine. Allowing general mission statements and passive acknowledgement to constitute the express language requirement of the Major Questions Doctrine would mean that any plausible basis for statutory authorization would qualify.

Osama Abuirshad et al. v. Garland et al

Attorneys with CAIR and CAIR-Greater Los Angeles Area announced the filing of a lawsuit against the federal government[81] for placing one Palestinian American on the No Fly List and for seizing the electronic device of another while interrogating him about organizing against Israel's genocide in Gaza.[82]

The lawsuit is among the first to challenge the FBI's apparent decision to target innocent people who speak up in support of Palestine and criticize Israel's devastating violence and illegal occupation of Palestine.

In May 2024, CAIR-Greater Los Angeles Area's client, Mustafa Zeidan, discovered he was placed on the No Fly List after he submitted a redress inquiry to the Department of Homeland Security to ask why he was denied boarding on a March 28, 2024, flight out of the Los Angeles International Airport. Zeidan had been regularly flying to Jordan to care for his sick mother and had increased his visits during the last two years, during which he has flown to see his mother every two to three months without issue.

While attempting to retrieve his boarding pass on March 28, Zeidan was stopped by airport security, who informed him that he would not be allowed to board the flight. After security refused to tell him why he was being denied boarding, Zeidan had no other choice but to leave the airport.

Zeidan's placement on the No Fly List came several months after he started consistently organizing lawful and peaceful protests in his city against Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza.

In August, CAIR-Los Angeles announced it had filed a lawsuit against the federal government for placing Palestinian American Mustafa Zeidan on the No Fly List, reportedly due to his involvement in anti-genocide protests. Source: CAIR-Los Angeles.

In May, CAIR joined state and national Muslim leaders for a news conference in Baltimore to call then President Joe Biden to end US complicity with Israel's genocide in Gaza following a massacre of dozens of Palestinian civilians in Rafah. Source: CAIR-National.

In their legal filing, CAIR attorneys also reported on the experience of Osama Abu Irshaid, "As a result of his status on the Government's secret list now, Dr. Abu Irshaid is detained at the border by federal agents each time he crosses it. While they detain Dr. Abu Irshaid, the federal agents ask Dr. Abu Irshaid humiliating questions about his lawful associations and work leading a non-profit organization that advocates for the rights of Palestinians. Because of his status on the Government's secret list, federal agents now seize Dr. Abu Irshaid's phone when he crosses the border, and they have successfully coerced him into unlocking it. As of the filing of this complaint, federal agents continue to hold Dr. Abu Irshaid's cellphone, despite several attempts by Dr. Abu Irshaid, through his attorneys, to retrieve it. Only one thing has changed for Dr. Abu Irshaid in recent months: his constant and passionate advocacy for an end to Israel's genocide in Gaza and an end to the United States' complicity in that genocide."

Congressional Investigations Targeting Muslim, Palestinian, Jewish, and Left-Leaning Advocacy Organizations

Anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian congressional investigations were initiated by House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chair James Comer (R-Ky.) and House Education and Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.). The investigations targeted more than 20 Muslim, Palestinian, and Jewish advocacy

organizations, baselessly accusing them of either having ties to terrorism or other foreign influence due to their actual or perceived support of pro-Palestinian human rights activities, especially on college campuses.

During a May hearing, members of the Committee referred to students peacefully protesting Israel's genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza as "antisemitic" and "violent." Such claims of antisemitism against student protesters have been previously used to censor pro-Palestinian advocacy on campuses nationwide and to stifle legitimate criticism of the human rights abuses and war crimes committed by the state of Israel.

Also in May, Comer and Foxx wrote the Department of the Treasury and asked its officials to disclose any Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) submitted by banks to the department regarding various American campus student groups, civil rights organizations, human rights groups, and advocacy groups supportive of Palestinian human rights.[83] The request targeted a wide spectrum of legally operating nonprofit and advocacy organizations and student groups, as well as foundations associated with prominent philanthropists like Bill and Melinda Gates and the Soros family.

Chair Comer also sent letters directly to some of these nonprofit groups demanding sensitive financial and administrative information.

In their joint letter to the Treasury Department, Chairs Comer and Foxx also said that their committees are "investigating the funding sources for groups that are organizing, leading, and participating in protests deemed pro-Hamas, antisemitic, anti-Israel, and anti-American, including those involving illegal encampments on American college campuses."

CAIR identified the action as an attempt to "smear and silence" Americans opposed to the Israeli government's genocide in Gaza. In a letter sent to the Republican chairs of the committees, CAIR wrote, "Your request lacks any legitimate congressional purpose and echoes the witch hunts of the McCarthy era. It also represents the latest political stunt in a consistently dishonest and increasingly desperate effort to protect a foreign government from criticism by smearing American students exercising their constitutional right to criticize that foreign government."[84]

In December 2023, CAIR had already called on the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce to stop ignoring and downplaying anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Palestinian racism after some committee members dismissed the seriousness of such bigotry during a hearing December 5, 2023 on antisemitism.[85] During the hearing, Committee Chair Foxx failed to discuss or raise concerns about Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian racism incidents on college campuses. Also, during the hearing Rep. Bob Good (R-Va.) stated that "it is wrong to suggest islamophobia and antisemitism are equivalent problems in this country."

An article from *The Forward*, published on May 7, called attention to Chairman Comer's troubling history of disparaging "Jewish committee members with insults that overlap with antisemitic tropes." Among other things, the article cited his refusal to condemn the Great Replacement Theory

and his engagement with antisemitic QAnon content. The article also details his use of coded antisemitic language against Jewish representatives.[86]

CAIR and others have criticized these congressional actions, citing reliance on unfounded accusations from far-right, pro-Israel sources. They draw parallels to historical congressional witch hunts led by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who aimed to smear prominent Americans, including actors, unionists, and civil rights activists, by accusing them of being sympathetic to or advancing Communism or having ties to the Soviet Union. These tactics relied heavily on unsubstantiated accusations and guilt by association, backed by congressional and federal law enforcement investigations.

Trump's 2017 Muslim Ban: A Path Forward for Nearly 25,000 Impacted People

In May, Attorneys representing people impacted by President Trump's Muslim and Africa Bans announced, "a federal judge has approved a major agreement that provides a clear visa reconsideration process, including waived application fees, to nearly 25,000 community members from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen who were harmed by the Trump administration's Muslim Ban."[87] At the time this report was finalized, President Trump had signed an executive order laying the groundwork for a renewed Muslim Ban.

CAIR-New York stands in solidarity with the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) at City Hall for the introduction of the NYC Data Disaggregation Revision Bill as part of CACF's Invisible No More campaign. Source: CAIR-New York.

In an order signed in March 2024, United States District Judge James Donato expressed impatience with Biden administration attorneys' arguments in long running efforts to resolve issues that arose under the Muslim Ban noting, "Overall, the conduct of the government's attorneys in this case has been careless and obstructive."[88] Asian Law Caucus had previously reported that a federal judge had "called the government's handling of the lawsuits a 'theater of the absurd' in court."[89]

As part of the agreement, Biden administration lawyers agreed to cover $893,000 in legal fees the visa applicants had accumulated. According to Law360,[90] the agreement, "settles the visa applicants' potential claims under the Equal Access to Justice Act, which directs the federal government to cover the legal fees for parties that win certain cases against the government."[91]

Outside of court, efforts to pass the No Ban Act have not yet succeeded. Championed by Representative Judy Chu (D-Calif.) and Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.), the act is a preventative response to President Donald Trump's proclamations banning travel or immigration by nationals of several, mostly Muslim, countries. Under the bill, admission to the U.S. could be blocked or otherwise restricted only when "specific and credible facts" support a determination by DHS that entry would undermine U.S. security or public safety, human rights, democratic processes, or international stability. First introduced in 2019, CAIR had applauded the House's April 2021 passage of the Act.

Opposing the Non-Profit Killer Bill: Protecting Traditional Checks and Balances While Resisting Arbitrary and Unaccountable Government Power

The Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act (H.R. 9495), commonly referred to as the "Nonprofit Killer Bill," would allow the Secretary of the Treasury to revoke the nonprofit tax status of religious and advocacy organizations without justification, charges, or due process if it is enacted into law. The bill would allow the Treasury to use "classified information" that target groups could not meaningfully review to mount a rebuttal. A revocation of non-profit status under this legislation would burden the target organization with a "terrorist supporter" label, even if it never faced formal criminal charges.

It could be easily weaponized to target any nonprofit organization any President finds objectionable.

Current laws, including the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), already address the financing of terrorism and prohibit designated entities

from claiming tax-exempt status. Additional legislation is redundant and pursuing it wastes tax-payer funds.

The legislation was meant to target charities and nonprofit organizations who were voicing opposition to Israel's policies of occupation, apartheid, and Gaza genocide.

It could be easily weaponized to target any nonprofit organization any President finds objectionable.

An early iteration of the bill, H.R 6408, passed in the U.S. House in April. H.R. 6408 was originally cosponsored by Rep. David Kustoff, David (R-Tenn.) and Rep. Bradely Scott Schneider (D-Ill.). At the same time in the Senate, Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) introduced S. 4136, an identical bill.[92]

In May, CAIR and 135 civil liberties, human rights, community, faith, and privacy organizations wrote to the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance urging Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) to reject the "dangerous and Orwellian" bill.

The groups asserted that it "would unconstitutionally harm all Americans' free speech and due process rights by creating new executive authorities that could be abused by any presidential administration seeking to terminate the tax-exempt status of nonprofit organizations arbitrarily."[93]

The groups pointed to recent instances of authorities attempting to revoke the status of politically disfavored groups such as "student-led chapters of Jewish and Palestinian groups organizing in support of Palestinian human rights" as examples of how such a law could be used to arbitrarily silence political opposition.

CAIR-National Executive Director Nihad Awad joins CAIR-Houston Director William White, CAIR-Dallas Executive Director Mustafa Carroll, CAIR Action Executive Director Basim Elkarra, and CAIR National Attorney Gadeir Abbas in Texas for a Know Your Rights discussion. Source: CAIR-Houston.

The letter raised several concerns, including:

- **Broad Discretionary Powers and Potential for Abuse:** The bill would grant the Secretary of the Treasury broad powers to revoke the tax-exempt status of nonprofits based on subjective determinations of being "terrorist-supporting organizations." Without sufficient accountability, this power could be misused by any administration to arbitrarily target organizations, especially in an increasingly polarized political environment.

- **Threat to Free Speech and Legitimate Advocacy:** The proposed legislation poses a serious threat to free speech, as it could be used to target organizations advocating for politically sensitive issues. Recent attempts by state governors and universities to suppress Jewish and Palestinian advocacy groups underscore the dangers of such unchecked powers. The inclusion of provisions aimed at silencing criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights, especially in light of ongoing humanitarian crises in Gaza and the West Bank, is particularly concerning. Codifying this bias would institutionalize prejudice and undermine America's commitment to human rights and equality.

- **Due Process and Legal Concerns:** The bill would allow the use of "classified information" to designate organizations as "terrorist-supporting," without permitting them to review or challenge this evidence in court. This lack of transparency is a violation of due process and mirrors the problematic federal terrorism watchlists, which have been criticized for their arbitrary and opaque nature.

- **Existing Legal Framework:** Laws already exist to address the financing of terrorism, including the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), both of which prohibit designated entities from claiming tax-exempt status. Additional legislation is unnecessary and increases the risk of abuse and legal challenges.

In May, the 135 organizations also successfully urged the U.S. Senate to reject Senator Cornyn's (R-Texas) attempt to add the act as an amendment to the 2025 Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act.

In September, the House Ways and Means Committee during a mark-up hearing voted[94] to advance H.R. 9495. CAIR and its allies supported H.R. 9495's primary goal—to postpone tax deadlines and reimburse late fees for U.S. nationals wrongfully detained or held hostage abroad. However, the legislation was tainted by a provision which drew from the text of H.R. 6408 and S. 4136. This new bill was originally cosponsored by Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.), Rep. David Kustoff, David (R-Tenn.), Rep. Bradely Scott Schneider (D-Ill.), and Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.).[95]

CAIR acknowledged that Representatives Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) and Don Beyer (D-Va.) expressed concerns about the act's harmful impact on due process during the committee's markup of H.R. 9495, both ultimately joined their Democratic colleagues in voting to support the bill.

On November 21, the new legislation was narrowly passed by a simple majority vote of 219-184, with 30 no votes.[96] The vote reflected

a significant increase in opposition, with 39 more Democratic members voting against the bill in comparison to a November 12 vote, when it fell short of the two-thirds majority needed for expedited approval, by 256-145.[97]

CAIR expressed gratitude to the 184 Democratic and Republican members of the U.S. House of Representatives who opposed the unchecked expansions of executive power and intrusion on speech rights of disfavored political voices.

CAIR remains committed to challenging this legislation in all its iterations and forms and will continue to advocate for the protection of nonprofit organizations' rights to free speech, due process, and equal treatment under the law.

Surveillance: Protecting Muslims App Users from Malicious Use of their Location Data

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) prohibited the sale of personal data from Muslim app users for potential use in warrantless surveillance. In a statement, the FTC said that Data broker X-Mode Social and its successor Outlogic will be prohibited from sharing or selling any sensitive location data to settle allegations that the company sold precise location data that could be used to track people's visits to sensitive locations such as medical and reproductive health clinics, places of religious worship, and domestic abuse shelters.

The data potentially provides insights into Muslims' prayer habits, religious studies, precise locations, and interactions with others using these apps. "Geolocation data can reveal not just where a person lives and whom they spend time with but also, for example, which medical treatments they seek and where they worship," then FTC Chair Lina M. Khan said about the prohibition.

In 2022, CAIR and the Communications & Technology Law Clinic (CTLC) at Georgetown University Law Center filed an FTC complaint against the data broker to investigate and enforce "potential violations of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act across the location data industry." In our 2023 report "Progress in the Shadow of Prejudice," CAIR observed that researchers and journalists

were documenting "a pattern of deceptive and unfair practices designed to monetize the special value of location data specific to the Muslim community."

For example, according to 2020 reporting by Vice, X-Mode was acquiring "location data directly from apps" then selling "that data to contractors, and by extension, the military." Vice added, "in 2020, the U.S. Special Operations Command admitted to purchasing the location data of users of a popular Muslim prayer app, Muslim Pro and a Muslim dating app, Muslim Mingle."[98]

In 2022, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Google had blocked dozens of apps from its Play Store because they included a secret code developed by a company linked to a U.S. military contractor that was "surreptitiously collecting data from…users." That hidden code allowed the military contractor to secretly collect "precise location, personal identifiers such as email and phone numbers as well as data about nearby computers and mobile devices." Apps pulled from Google Play included "numerous Muslim-themed prayer apps such as Al Moazin and Qibla Compass."[99]

The data potentially provides insights into Muslims' prayer habits, religious studies, precise locations, and interactions with others using these apps. "Geolocation data can reveal not just where a person lives and whom they spend time with but also, for example, which medical treatments they seek and where they worship," then FTC Chair Lina M. Khan said about the prohibition.

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), Section 702 as a Tool to Monitor Pro-Ceasefire Protests

In February, *Wired* reported alarming tactics employed by Republican House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Turner (R-Ohio) to justify the continuation of the backdoor search loophole within FISA Section 702.[100] Chairman Turner's misguided efforts, citing pro-ceasefire protests as a pretext, endanger privacy rights and perpetuate mass surveillance practices that undermine fundamental freedoms.

Chairman Turner and Democrat Jim Himes (D-Conn.) advocated for legislation that would increase warrantless surveillance, targeting pro-Palestinian advocates, immigrants, and their families. The push disregarded the Fourth Amendment and sets a dangerous precedent for unchecked government surveillance.[101]

CAIR joined 100 organizations, including Muslim Advocates, Muslims for Just Futures, and Lucy Parsons Labs, in working to close the backdoor search and data broker loopholes before Congress considered reauthorizing the law.[102] By year's end, efforts to reform the legislation had failed.[103]

CAIR also called for the rejection of efforts by the House Intelligence Committee to expand warrantless surveillance.

As it stands, Section 702 permits government agencies like the FBI to collect phone records and internet activity of foreigners overseas. However, CAIR has long opposed Section 702 as it also allows the government to collect the phone records and internet activity

of millions of Americans communicating with overseas family members, friends, schools, nonprofits, and businesses without a warrant.[104] This authority has also been misused to surveil activists, journalists, and even Congressman Darin Lahood (R-Ill.), a former Assistant U.S. Attorney, Chief Terrorism Prosecutor, and member of the House Intelligence Committee.[105]

Recommendations

Public officials at all levels of government, corporate leaders, and those speaking on behalf of places of education, must respect free speech on Palestine and the value of human life. If they choose to comment on international affairs such as events in Israel and Palestine, then equal weight and attention should be given to Palestinian suffering. If they choose to comment on issues relating to bias domestically, then the very well documented surge in anti-Muslim bigotry and racism must be included in their concerns. This recommendation was made in our 2024 civil rights report. CAIR has recorded instances of public officials, educators, and corporate leaders showing support for Israel amid a lack of concern for the subsequent loss of Palestinian life, as well as attempts to stifle concern for the plight of Palestinian civilians. CAIR holds that every life has value.

Disregarding legitimate concerns of those who value Palestinian life and oppose occupation and apartheid contributes to an atmosphere in which hate toward Palestinians, Muslims, and Arabs domestically—as we have witnessed in a period of intensified domestic Islamophobia since the final months of 2023—is permissible.

Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) receives the 2024 Champion of Justice Award at the CAIR-Massachusetts annual banquet for her commitment to racial justice, civil rights, and equitable foreign policy, including her vocal calls for a ceasefire in Gaza. Source: CAIR-Massachusetts.

The Trump administration must suspend the FBI's dissemination of their watchlist, which leaked copies show to be "almost entirely lists of Arabic and Muslim names." This recommendation was made in our 2024 civil rights report. The FBI's list not only ruins the lives of people who are on it but it follows them wherever those people go. Congress did not give the FBI this authority. There is no law that made the watchlist. Even the presidential executive order that supposedly gave rise to the FBI's list did not put the FBI in charge. Instead, it was an agreement between several agencies that put this list and all the authorities having a list entails in the hands of the FBI. But neither the FBI nor any other government agency should have a secret list. They have abused the one that they have now, and there is no such thing as a good, lawful kind of secret government list made available to hundreds of thousands of government actors. It is time to bring this practice to a close.[106]

The U.S. Government must tie police funding to the submission of hate crimes data. This recommendation was made in our 2024 civil rights report. CAIR continues to call for the Trump Administration and Congress to work together to require the federal government to condition any aid, grants, training, or other assistance to local law enforcement agencies on their agreement to submit regular and complete data regarding hate crime incidents targeting minority communities.[107]

Mosques and other visibly Muslim institutions should consider taking advantage of security grants. This recommendation was made in our 2024 civil rights report. Muslim community centers,

CAIR-Massachusetts Executive Director Tahirah Amatul-Wadud presents at the Muslim Youth Leadership Program in Boston. Source: CAIR-Massachusetts.

Islamic houses of worship, and nonprofits may be in need of increased security. The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) provides federal funding for physical security enhancements and other security-related activities to nonprofit organizations that are at risk of a terrorist attack. In past years, applicants with one physical site may apply for up to $150,000 for that site. Applicants with multiple physical sites were able to apply for up to $150,000 per site, for up to three sites, for a maximum of $450,000 per sub-applicant. CAIR is committed to continuing to monitor DHS's NPSG program to ensure that it remains a benefit to the American Muslim community. If we ever see any signs of discrimination or law enforcement intrusion into community spaces, we will quickly and appropriately address those issues.

Banks must end the wrongful targeting of American Muslim, Arab, and Persian families. This recommendation was made in our 2023 civil rights report. In 2023, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding reported "Muslims are the most likely faith group to report facing challenges while banking."[108] In 2024, the Treasury Department released its de-risking strategy and expressed some criticism of the practice which it defined as "financial institutions terminating or restricting business relationships indiscriminately with broad categories of clients rather than analyzing and managing the risk of clients in a targeted manner." The Treasury found that "profitability is the primary factor in financial institutions' de-risking decisions."[109] Also in 2024, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Representative Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) issued a letter, "demanding answers from the heads of several leading U.S. banks about policies that have disproportionately targeted Muslim Americans and communities of color."[110] The federal government and other financial industry regulators should update their practices and guidelines to ensure greater equity in banking. Banks' ongoing wrongful targeting of American Muslim, Arab, and Persian families and closing their accounts are harmful and discriminatory practices in the U.S. financial sector that must end. This discrimination also extends to other immigrants and communities of color.

A Muslim woman tries to withdraw money from an ATM. Photo by astrakanimages via Envato Elements

CAIR's Vision Regarding Islamophobia in America

"Our vision looks toward the time when Muslims in America are granted equal access to social opportunities and equal protection under the law. Unhindered by Islamophobia, Muslims are afforded equal opportunities to pursue their dreams and potential."

In 2011, CAIR put forward a vision regarding Islamophobia in America to represent the progress we seek to make as a result of our work to overcome anti-Muslim bias. Prior to the onset of the Islamophobia wave triggered by the onset of the latest round of violence in decades of Israeli apartheid and occupation of Palestinian land, our staff began the process of investigating if the original vision needed updating.

Two main suggestions emerged which informed a renewed understanding of CAIR's mission to address Islamophobia. Participants suggested that the vision be amended to emphasize the need for Muslim communities to feel a sense of belonging. However, that sense of belonging should not come at the expense of the Muslim community. Other participants cautioned that parts of the 2011 vision may place too much emphasis on the need for others to hold Muslims in high esteem, potentially suggesting Muslims should sacrifice their beliefs in order to garner approval.

In March, CAIR-Georgia held Muslim Advocacy Day at the Georgia State Capitol. Source: CAIR-Georgia.

Columbia University students protesting in front of Butler Library on April 17, 2024. Source: CAIR-New York, photo/design courtesy of Zubair, ICNA-Nassau.

Background, Methodology, Limitations

This report assesses the following research question: What are the main trends, advances, and challenges American Muslims faced regarding equal access to social opportunities and equal protection in the year under review? If a Muslim, or someone perceived to be Muslim faces discrimination or different treatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, viewpoints, or other characteristics associated with being Muslim then CAIR asserts that their civil rights have been violated.

Background

From 1996 to 2009, CAIR published an annual report on the status of civil rights for Muslims in the United States. After a brief hiatus the annual report was relaunched with reports covering incidents in 2014-2017. No reports covering 2018 and 2019 incidents were published. To accommodate pandemic needs and staff changes, CAIR reduced the variety of data on which the report draws and began again publishing reports covering incidents occurring in 2020 through 2024, the year covered in this present report.

Methodology

Each year, thousands of Americans contact CAIR through a variety of media, including telephone, email, and our online complaint system. When possible, CAIR staff also may also reach out to offer their services to individuals whose incidents were reported in news sources and not directly to CAIR.

With each complaint, case intake staffers review preliminary materials and conduct interviews with prospective clients as part of the confidential intake process. These nationwide intake staff will then classify the case using the complaint category definitions provided earlier in this report. Each CAIR office that does intakes then submits their annual totals to the research and advocacy team.

CAIR's research and advocacy department staff reviewed approximately 1,988 statements and videos issued by the organization in 2024. From this information we drew many of the case studies and special sections. Our staff check these cases for updates with those involved or through media sources.

Dr. Ahmad Banna received an award at the 2024 CAIR-Ohio Cleveland Ramadan Iftar in recognition of his years of service to the chapter. Source: CAIR-Cleveland.

Limitations

This report contains a mere snapshot of the experiences of American Muslims, including children, youth, and families, across the United States.

CAIR knows that bias incidents targeting the community are vastly underreported to both law enforcement and community institutions. In part, this is a reflection of decades of abuse by a number of law enforcement agencies.

Desensitization plays a role in non-reporting as well. CAIR staff often hear of episodes in which individuals are harassed and do not report the incident because the target feels that either nothing can be done, or that such treatment is expected and normal and does not necessitate an official complaint.

Where CAIR is present, the local community is more likely to report cases to the organization. Thus, in states like California and Ohio where CAIR has multiple offices, higher numbers of cases are expected than in states like South Carolina or Montana where the organization does not yet have an office.

Finally, over the course of 2022, CAIR's civil rights team began the process of adopting a new proprietary case management system. As part of that process, they also updated the complaint category definitions. As a result, in many instances we cannot make 1-1 comparisons between our case types in 2021 and 2023.

CAIR knows that bias incidents targeting the community are vastly underreported to both law enforcement and community institutions. In part, this is a reflection of decades of abuse by a number of law enforcement agencies.

Appendix 1: 2024 Islamic Place of Worship Incidents

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
Jan	Islamic Community Center of Gainesville	Gainesville	FL	DDV	An unknown person or persons shattered windows, leaving the Islamic Center's sacred space covered in broken glass,
Jan	Islamic Center of Owings Mills	Owings Mills	MD	Intimidation	Leaders report threatening calls from an unknown individual over a period of time.
Jan	Masjid Baitul Haqq	Mobile	AL	Intimidation	Someone reportedly sent to a message to mosque, saying that they plan to "shoot your mosque up" and "kill as many as possible" with an AR-10 and detonate a bomb in the mosque's bathroom."
Feb	Masjid Al-Emaan	Stockton	CA	DDV	This was the third in a series of three separate acts of hate apparently perpetrated by the same person. The third incident occurred on February 8, 2024, when the same alleged perpetrator placed a doll on the finial topper on the mosque's fence and set fire to it, causing the heavy nylon material attached to the fence for privacy to also catch fire. The first (November 2022), a shotgun shell left in front of the gate where the code entrance is located. The second (a few months later, presumably early-mid 2023), a rock thrown through the glass door of the mosque. These incidents have been reported to Stockton PD with limited attention and no success, despite the perpetrator's image clearly captured in more than one video. The incident report number is: 67102092024
Feb	Islamic Center of Chattanooga	Chattanooga	TN	DDV	A man urinated on the front of the mosque; charges were later dropped. CAIR objected to dropping charges.
Feb	Islamic Center of Melville	Melville	NY	Harassment	Ali Z Mohammed reports, "A man trespassed into the Islamic center of Melville NY yesterday afternoon harassing people inside the mosque and shouting for 'hostages to be free."
March	Downtown Islamic Center	Chicago	IL	DDV	A man followed worshippers into the mosque while yelling Islamophobic slurs such as "Muslims should die." He also broke the front door's glass.

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
March	Islamic Center of Greater Miami	Miami Gardens	FL	Harassment	A man faced felony charges of disturbing a religious assembly with prejudice, in addition to a misdemeanor trespassing charge after disrupting mosque-goers twice in a short period of time.
March	Islamic Center of North Marin	Novato	CA	DDV	David John Margoliash, 48, was arrested on suspicion of unlawfully using tear gas, disturbing a religious meeting and being a felon in possession of tear gas,"
March	Masjid An-Noor	Bridgeport	CT	Harassment	A man left two bags of pork products at a mosque entrance during Ramadan (Instance 1, on a Saturday)
March	Masjid An-Noor	Bridgeport	CT	Harassment	A man left two bags of pork products at a mosque entrance during Ramadan (Instance 2, on a Monday two days after instance 1)
April	Center for Islamic Life at Rutgers University	New Brunswick	NJ	DDV	Rutgers staff say facility is viewed as a place of worship. A man vandalized the property.
April	Masjid al-Tawheed	San Francisco	CA	DDV	Robert Gray allegedly smashed six building windows (Incident 1, April 3—Wednesday—according to video in linked article)
April	Masjid al-Tawheed	San Francisco	CA	Harassment	Robert Gray allegedly entered the mosque and swore at mosque-goers (Incident 2, the Tuesday after incident1)
April	Masjid An-Noor	Bridgeport	CT	Intimidation	A man in a work van called mosque-goers terrorists and made threats.
April	Madinah Lakes Project	Lino Lakes	MN	Zoning	Islamophobic comments include, "If you think this Madinah development is for everybody, how many people want to live next to a mosque?"
May	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 1, May 29)
May	Muhammad Mosque 7C	Brooklyn	NY	DDV	A man smashed a mosque sign.
May	Alhikma Islamic Center	Minneapolis	MN	DDV	A driver drove toward and then swerved into a mosque-goer, ramming him.
June	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 2, June 15)
June	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 3, June 27)

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
June	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 4, June 29)
June	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 5, June 30)
June	Muhammad Mosque #38	Columbia	SC	DDV	Mosque was painted with red crosses and a message reading “get out.” A symbol drawn on the sidewalk outside the mosque resembles a crude Nazi swastika.
June	Diyanet Center of America	Lanham	MD	Harassment	A male carrying an American flag, reportedly entered the courtyard filled with worshipers and made comments and behaved in an erratic manner that caused some community members to feel uncomfortable and unsafe.
June	Masjid Al-Farook	Lodi	MI	Zoning	CAIR lawsuit alleges that Lodi Township’s zoning scheme made it impossible to establish a place of worship within the township. Settled in Oct.
July	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism (incident 6, July 2)
July	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	"On July 7, a Tibyan Center member thwarted an attempted break-in " (incident 7, July 7)
July	Tibyan Center	St. Anthony	MN	DDV	Vandalism, "perpetrators were back on Tuesday," article written July 18 so Tuesday would be July 16 (incident 8, July 16)
July	Islamic Society of Gastonia	Gastonia	NC	DDV	A man broke windows in the mosque. He was arrested and charged.
July	Al Falah Center	Bridgewater	NJ	DDV	A man spraypainted bias graffiti on the mosque. He was later arrested and charged.
July	Al-Aqsa Islamic Society	Philadelphia	PA	DDV	Raheem Jefferson was murdered as he headed to lead prayer. Police recovered at least 17 rounds at the scene.
August	Darul Hikmah Islamic Center	Minneapolis	MN	DDV	A man used a crowbar to inflict significant damage to the mosque, link includes video.

Month	Name of Center or Mosque	City	State	Mosque Incident Type	Details
August	Dar Al-Qalam Islamic Center	Minneapolis	MN	Intimidation	News report, "Community leaders said the Dar Al-Qalam Islamic Center alone received more than a dozen phone calls from a St. Cloud phone number where a caller made veiled threats and used anti-Muslim slurs." At one point "the caller texted a video of the 2019 deadly mosque shooting in New Zealand."
Oct	Chagrin Valley Islamic Center	Solon	OH	Harassment	An online petition urged city leaders to condemn the mosque accusing its leadership of making hateful statements.
Nov	Islamic Center of Mankato	Mankato	MN	DDV	An individual on a bicycle attempted to start a fire along the mosque's exterior wall. Police later said it was firecrackers and no harm was intended. Mosque leaders dispute the police conclusion.
Dec	Islamic Center of Federal Way	Kent	WA	DDV	Security video shows a man throwing rocks through and breaking the window of the mosque, then driving away in a pickup truck.
Dec	Islamic Center of San Francisco	San Francisco	CA	Intimidation	A man tore pages from the Quran and appeared to threaten people with a hammer, that hammer may have been a toy.
Dec	Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center	Minneapolis	MN	Intimidation	Threats were made against the center and confirmed by police, who asserted the threats had no credibility.
Dec	Unidentified Nashville mosque	Nashville	TN	Intimidation	Gunner Joseph Fisher reportedly planned to carry out a mass shooting like that targeting two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019.

Endnotes

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8– Incidents separated by more than 2 hours are counted as separate incidents. In part, this is because the same individual will at times target a place of worship over a period of days or weeks, or may commit one act, leave, and then return later.

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“When we said, it’s a tiny girl, she is really tiny, really tiny. Cute girl. She smiles with her eyes. So sweet. So sad it happened to her.” - **CAIR-Austin Operations Manager Shaimaa Zayan**, addressing an Islamophobe’s attempt to murder a three-year-old.

“Minnesota leads the nation in attacks against mosques for the past three years. These eight incidents [over three months] at this particular mosque unfortunately appear to be at this moment a connection to the same type of behavior.” - **CAIR-Minnesota Executive Director Jaylani Hussein**

“Threats of disciplinary action, securitizing campuses with police presence and violence, and tolerating doxxing and harassment of our students is unacceptable.” - **CAIR-Philadelphia** signed letter calling on area college presidents and school district leaders to respect anti-genocide students’ First Amendment rights.

“The irony is that for years, Republicans in Congress complained about federal involvement in the education system. Now they suddenly want federal intrusion because they think the federal government can be weaponized to force colleges and universities to silence students and college professors who speak up for Palestinian human rights.”- **CAIR National Deputy Director Edward Ahmed Mitchell**

“Let’s assume for a moment that this person had to be arrested legally. This is not the way to do it and in no civilization, no time, and no place on earth is this kind of behavior acceptable.” - **CAIR-Chicago Executive Director Ahmed Rehab** after authorities dropped charges against a police officer who allegedly used excessive force against a Muslim teenager.

“Although we and the American Muslim community recognize the important historical and religious significance of the Bible, forcing teachers to use it and only it in their curriculum is inappropriate and unconstitutional. - **CAIR-Oklahoma Director Adam Soltani**

“The lawsuit seeks to ensure other young American Muslims do not face what Mohammed experienced- driving while Black and Muslim, irresponsibly brought into the criminal justice system.” - **CAIR-Philadelphia Civil Rights Attorney Timothy Welbeck**

“The case sheds light on the anti-Muslim animus pervading jails and prisons across the country. Dekalb County’s refusal to even hang a clock to accommodate Mr. Simmonds’ religious practice are indicative of the disregard for Muslims often seen in our country’s carceral system.” - **CAIR-Georgia Legal Director Javeria Jamil**

CAIR IS AMERICA’S LARGEST MUSLIM CIVIL LIBERTIES AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION. ITS MISSION IS TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM, PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS, PROMOTE JUSTICE, AND EMPOWER AMERICAN MUSLIMS.

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