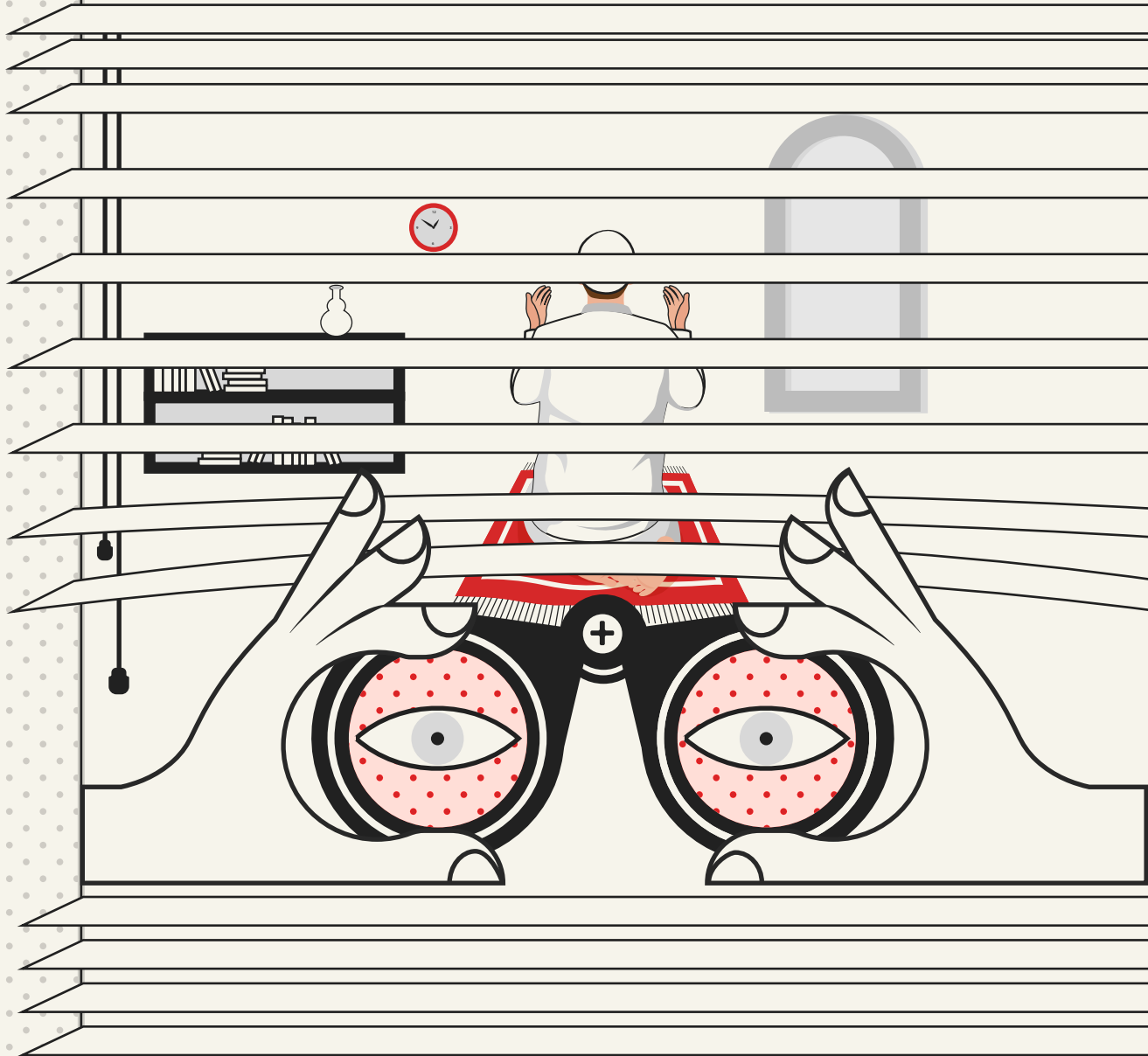


STILL SUSPECT:

The Impact of Structural Islamophobia



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CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American-Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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Executive Summary

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, is at the forefront of defending the civil liberties of American Muslims while pursuing justice for all. As part of our mission, CAIR provides free legal services to individuals who have been victims of anti-Muslim discrimination and bigotry. We have offices in **25 states** to help clients obtain fair and just resolutions for their cases.

The title of this report is *Still Suspect: The Impact of Structural Islamophobia*. The word *structural* is significant in the understanding that Islamophobia has seeped into every part of our society. It has made its way into government institutions and the public sphere through laws and policies, political rhetoric, and other manifestations. For example, **in 2021, CAIR received a total of 6,720 complaints nationwide** involving a range of issues including **immigration and travel, discrimination, law enforcement and government overreach, hate and bias incidents, incarcerated rights, school incidents, and anti-BDS/free speech**. These complaints clearly indicate that government discrimination and bias continue to have a disproportionate effect on American Muslims and further demonstrate that our communities continue to be viewed with suspicion.

This report seeks to illustrate the impacts of severe structural and interpersonal Islamophobia in the United States. We outline

four different sections to demonstrate this impact. The first section details a breakdown of the total complaints CAIR received in 2021 encompassing the wide range of issues detailed above. We also provide seven key takeaways from the data highlighting the severity of complaints. For instance, we recorded a **55% increase** in law enforcement and government overreach complaints in 2021.

The second section of this report provides an analysis of the data and potential explanations for any changes in the number of complaints received. For example, we recorded a high of **2,823 immigration and travel-related complaints in 2021**. This increase can be attributed in large part due to the Afghan immigration crisis, for which CAIR offices were contacted regarding urgent and immediate assistance in humanitarian parole, Special Immigrant Visa applications, and other immigration-related issues.

**in 2021, CAIR
received a total of
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nationwide**

The third section of the report provides a glimpse into the impact of Islamophobia on the lives of American Muslims. We describe a number of anti-Muslim incidents that happened across the country including mosque vandalism, hate crimes, travel incidents, school bullying, and more. In one disturbing case, a high school teacher in New Jersey allegedly told an Arab Muslim student, "We don't negotiate with terrorists," when he asked for more time on his homework.

In the fourth section, we provide a general overview of the government's terrorist

watchlist and No-Fly List to demonstrate the severe impact of structural Islamophobia and continued suspicion of the Muslim community. As detailed in-depth in this report, the terrorist watchlist [stigmatizes](#) hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have not been charged with or convicted of a crime, including many American citizens, as “known or suspected terrorists” without any semblance of due process. Placement on the watchlist can prevent individuals from traveling by air or sea and subject them to enhanced and invasive screening at airports. Currently, the watchlist includes more than one million names. .

We close by offering key recommendations to curb the threat of Islamophobia in the United States. For example, Congress should adopt legislation making federal funding for local law enforcement agencies contingent

on those agencies documenting and reporting hate crimes to the FBI’s national database. This would offer an incentive for local law enforcement to take the threat of Islamophobia seriously and could help the public and federal government gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing the American Muslim community.

CAIR is committed to protecting the rights of American Muslims and empowering them to fight for justice for all people. We aspire to live in a nation in which all Americans have the right to freely practice their faith regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity.

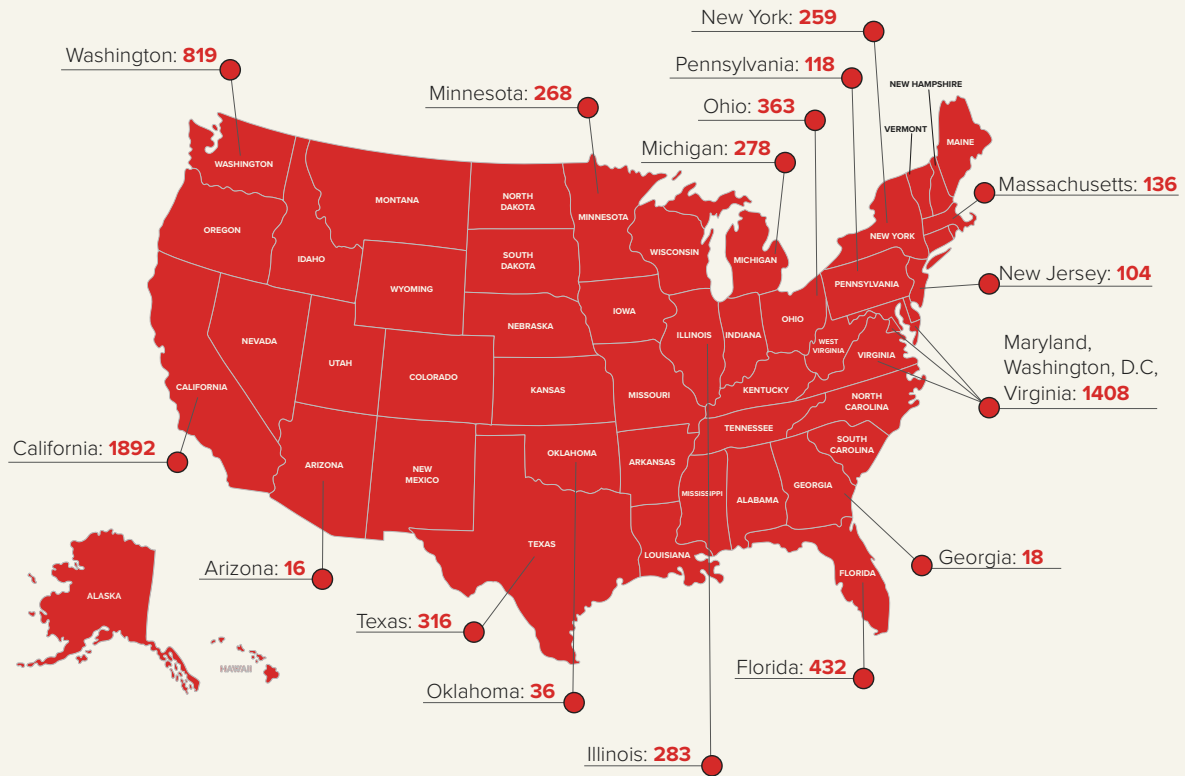


**CAIR recorded
2,823 complaints
regarding
immigration and
travel-related
issues**

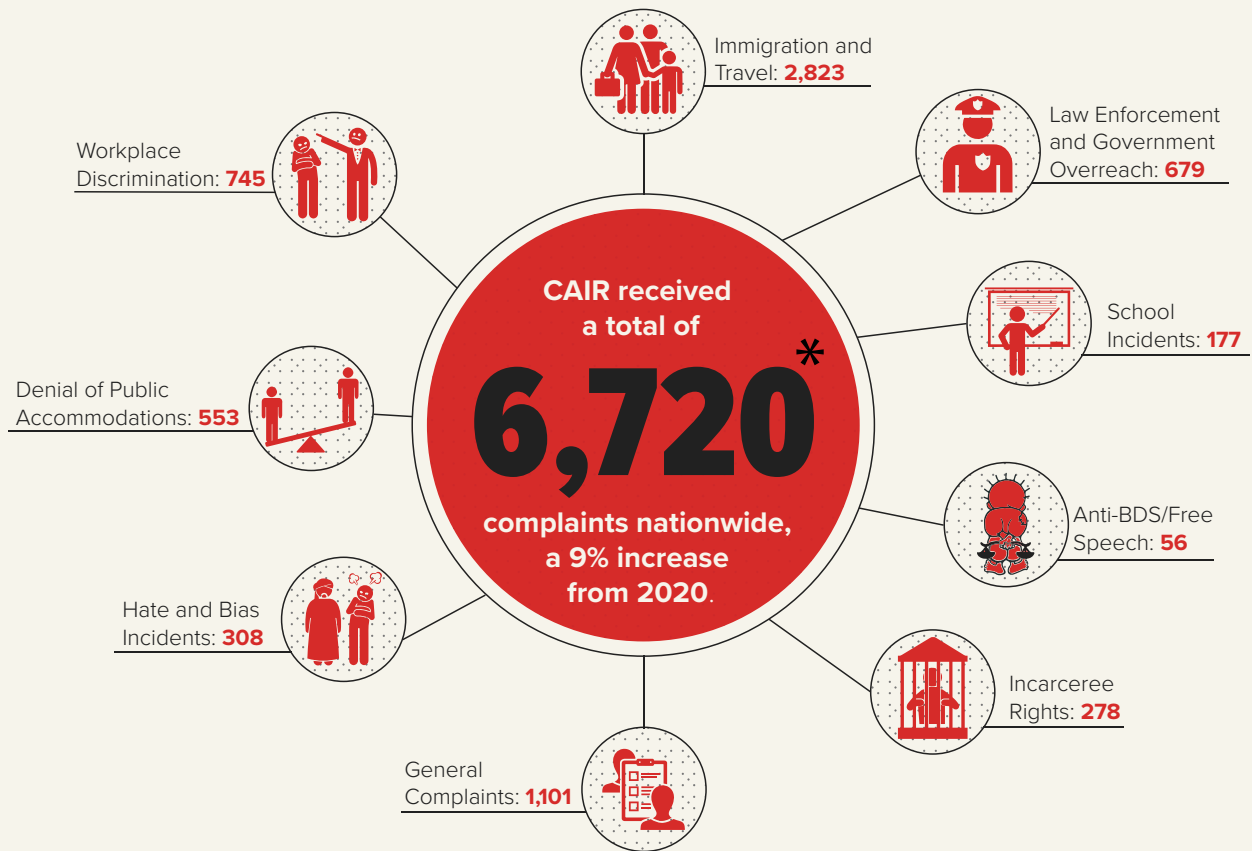
The following findings come from our data collected in 2021.

1. CAIR received a total of 6,720 complaints nationwide involving a range of issues including immigration and travel, workplace discrimination, denial of public accommodations, law enforcement and government overreach, hate and bias incidents, incarcerated rights, school incidents, and anti-BDS/free speech.
This is the highest number of civil rights complaints we've received in 27 years.
2. There was a 9% increase in total complaints since 2020.
3. CAIR recorded 2,823 complaints regarding immigration and travel-related issues, making it the most frequent report received for the second year in a row.
4. There was a 28% increase in hate and bias incidents which included reports of forcible removal of hijabs, harassment, vandalism, and physical assault, among other complaints.
5. 35% of law enforcement and government overreach complaints concerned the FBI's terrorist watchlist.
6. We recorded a 13% increase in workplace and public accommodation discrimination complaints.

Civil Rights Complaints Across the Nation in 2021



Breakdown of Total Complaints in 2021



*This represents **6,720 unique complaints**. Complaints may have included multiple discriminatory issues. Complaints are only cataloged under one category in this report. For example, if an individual complains about being placed on the watchlist and having a bank account closed, this will be recorded as either watchlist or public accommodations incident. **Not both.**

What the Complaints Encompass

Immigration and Travel complaints consisted of issues involving the following: the Afghan immigration crisis, citizenship, asylum, CBP and USCIS, airline profiling incidents, and the Muslim Ban.

Workplace Discrimination complaints encompassed discrimination regarding employment (hostile work environment, retaliation, religious accommodations).

Denial of Public Accommodations complaints included bank account closures, denial of services, and housing incidents.

Law Enforcement and Government Overreach complaints included FBI, police, the No-Fly List, and watchlist surveillance complaints.

Hate and Bias reports included verbal harassment, mosque vandalism, and physical violence, such as the forcible removal of hijabs.

Incarceree Rights encompassed inmate complaints regarding religious accommodation issues, facilities, etc.

School Incidents consisted of bullying, Islamophobic school curriculum, and holiday denials.

Anti-BDS/Free Speech reports included prohibitions in engaging in boycotts, divestment, and sanctions, as well as issues surrounding content.

General Complaints encompassed criminal cases, COVID-19 issues, family, stimulus, zoning, referral requests, etc.

**IN 2021 CAIR
RECEIVED
A TOTAL
OF 6,720
COMPLAINTS
NATIONWIDE**

Seven Key Takeaways

1. We recorded a 56% increase in immigration complaints, which may have resulted from both the Afghan immigration crisis in summer 2021 and the increased number of Americans traveling as the pandemic eased.
2. There was a 13% increase in workplace and public accommodation discrimination complaints as many workers returned to in-person work and most businesses resumed normal operations.
3. We documented a 28% increase in hate and bias incidents, which reinforces the fact that many local law enforcement agencies are drastically underreporting, or completely failing to report hate crimes to the FBI's national database.
4. We noted a 55% increase in complaints of abusive overreach by law enforcement officers and government agencies, including FBI harassment and police misconduct.
5. 35% of law enforcement and government overreach complaints involved the government's so-called terrorism watchlist, which stigmatizes hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have not been charged with or convicted of a crime, including many American citizens, as "known or suspected terrorists" without any semblance of due process.
6. We observed a 15% decrease in incarcerated rights complaints, the cause of which remains unclear.
7. We detailed a 55% increase in school incident complaints as most students returned back to in-person instruction.



Deeper Into the Data: An Analysis

The 9% increase in overall complaints nationwide comes as no surprise. As COVID-19 restrictions lifted and public places, restaurants, entertainment venues, and places of worship reopened, CAIR offices nationwide began receiving complaints regarding immigration and travel, workplace discrimination, denial of public accommodations, law enforcement and government overreach, hate and bias incidents, incarcerated rights, school incidents, anti-BDS, and free speech, among other reported issues. Immigration and travel-related issues were the most frequent report received in 2021, with a record 2,823 complaints.

In 2021, the Biden administration [pulled](#) all troops out of Afghanistan. Although President Biden was correct in ending this “forever” war, the withdrawal itself was disastrous, leading to an immediate takeover by the Taliban. As a result, CAIR offices were contacted for urgent and immediate assistance in humanitarian parole, Special Immigrant Visa applications, and other immigration-related issues. In the aftermath of the pullout from Afghanistan, tens of thousands of Afghans resettled across the U.S. This primarily caused a spike in immigration and travel complaints, in addition to requests for asylum assistance, airline profiling incidents, issues with Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and more.

**CAIR documented
679 complaints
regarding law
enforcement
and government
overreach**

Related to travel, CAIR documented 679 complaints regarding law enforcement and government overreach, 35% of which concerned the government’s terrorist watchlist. The terrorist watchlist [stigmatizes](#) hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have not been charged with or convicted of a crime, including many American citizens, as “known or suspected terrorists” without any semblance of due process.

Placement on the watchlist can prevent individuals from traveling by air or sea and subject them to enhanced and invasive screening at airports. It has also been well-documented that the government has

made [consistent errors](#) in placing individuals based on questionable and inaccurate information with a flawed review process. To this day, the government refuses to [disclose the standards](#) it uses to place people on the No-Fly List, which prevents individuals from boarding a flight indefinitely. With that said, CAIR regularly receives

complaints from Muslims placed on the No-Fly List and other lists. We do our best to assist individuals in removing their names from the No-Fly List by either suing the government or using the Department of Homeland Security’s Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, which can take months.

In addition to the increase in law enforcement and government overreach complaints, we also noted an increase in hate/bias incidents. As COVID-19 subsided and institutions

returned to operation, people naturally reentered society; unfortunately, they also returned to the vulnerabilities of society, making them subject to harassment, violence, and other acts of discrimination. For example, CAIR documented four anti-mosque incidents in May 2021 alone, including reports of vandalism, attempted stabbing, a death threat, and harassment. We also received complaints of physical assault, multiple regarding forcible removal of hijabs, which you can read more about in the *case summaries* section of this report.

It's important to note that hate crimes in the Muslim community continue to be severely underreported. According to Axios, law enforcement agencies around the country are opting not to share statistics about hate crimes with the FBI. In fact, they found that the number of police agencies [participating](#) in the FBI's hate crimes report has declined for the third straight year. In addition, they [found](#) that 88% of cities don't report hate crimes at all.

Another reason why there is a large disparity in the data is because of the lack of trust Muslim communities have in law enforcement. American Muslim communities have been subjected to mass surveillance, deportation, questioning, and other harassment by local and federal law enforcement with no accountability in sight. This ultimately erodes the trust in law enforcement and results in severe underreporting of hate crimes and bias incidents.

We also received an increase in school incidents complaints primarily due to students returning to in-person instruction. These reports included bullying, Islamophobic school curriculum, and religious accommodation

issues. Accommodation issues were not limited to students. We found that Muslims in the workforce were subject to the same, as well as other forms of employment discrimination which included hostile work environments, incidents related to hijab, harassment, wrongful termination, and more. Workplace discrimination accounted for 11% of all workplace and public accommodation discrimination complaints. As we witnessed many people return to the office, unfortunately, we also observed an increase in complaints.

Lastly, we received 56 complaints concerning anti-BDS/free speech issues. Currently, 35 states have passed unconstitutional anti-BDS laws, resolutions, or executive orders that punish companies for choosing to boycott Israel. According to [Palestine Legal](#), between 2014 and 2022, 233 [anti-BDS bills](#) have been introduced with a 22% success rate. These bills are nothing short of illegal and are designed to stop the growing movement supporting Palestinian freedom while shielding Israel from any criticism. Thankfully, CAIR has successfully won lawsuits in every case against these unconstitutional laws in states including Georgia and Texas.



Case Summaries: The Impact of Islamophobia

Listed below are examples of the effects of Islamophobia on the lived experiences of American Muslims. All incidents occurred in 2021.

Anti-Mosque Incidents

New Mexico: A mosque in Albuquerque was the [target](#) of an arson attack. Surveillance video shows a woman setting multiple fires near the mosque's prayer hall. Mosque members believe the fires were started by a woman who allegedly came to the house of worship earlier that week expressing hostility.

Washington: The Islamic Center of Olympia was targeted by an [explosive](#) at the end of November 2021. Surveillance footage shows the arrival of a car from which a device is thrown to the ground in front of the mosque. The car then speeds away, just seconds before an explosion occurs. Neighbors reported the blast was strong enough to be heard up to two miles away.

Minnesota: The Dar Al-Qalam Islamic Center was reportedly [vandalized](#) in November 2021, along with the mosque director's car. This incident occurred one month after a Muslim cemetery in the state was vandalized in an arson attempt.

New York: Surveillance footage shows that on August 13, 2021, a man [threw](#) garbage and urine on the front door of the Faizan-e-Aisha mosque in Hicksville. Days later, the same individual allegedly returned to the mosque

and threatened people who came to pray.

Minnesota: The Al Maghfirah Cemetery in Castle Rock Township was the target of an attempted arson attack. Early one morning, members of the community smelled a gas leak. Upon further examination, a large gas pipe inside the facility was discovered to have been cut along with thirty strategically placed tires inside the building. This was the second time the cemetery was targeted; it withstood vandalism and destruction of property in 2017. The cemetery also faced opposition and had to mount a legal challenge against the township to allow construction.

Washington: The Umar Al-Farooq Masjid in Mountlake Terrace was broken into and [vandalized](#) by a man and woman who allegedly desecrated religious items in the mosque, including Qurans, Islam's holy book. The attack was caught on security camera footage and showed the individuals tossing the mosque's Qurans and other religious items into garbage bags before throwing them away in a nearby dumpster. The incident occurred a week after the Islamic Center of Tacoma was targeted in an arson attack, which caused extensive damage to the facility.

Michigan: The entrance sign and periphery lighting of an Islamic Center was [destroyed](#) and vandalized on the twentieth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

California: The Islamic Center of San Francisco was the [target](#) of vandalism in November 2021. The perpetrators allegedly threw a beer bottle through a window of the mosque which caused it to spill inside the house of worship.

California: A letter was [sent](#) to the Islamic Center of Hawthorne falsely claiming to be from Congresswoman Maxine Waters' office. The letter threatened to send the National Guard to close the mosque and ended with "Your religious services and rituals to praising silly Muhammed, is inconceivable and intolerable to me."

Minnesota: Vandals spray-painted [hate messages](#) including "Death to Islam", "F**k Islam", "N**ger", and a swastika symbol on and near the Moorhead Fargo Islamic Center. A window of the mosque was also broken.

Virginia: There was an attempted [stabbing](#) of a security guard at the Dar Al Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church. The attacker reportedly pointed his knife at several people before fleeing the scene.

New York: The Tayba Islamic Center in Brooklyn was [vandalized](#) and spray-painted with the message "Death to Palestine".

California: The Islamic Center of Suffolk County in Brentwood was [vandalized](#) with pro-Trump graffiti. The perpetrators also burned the Alam, a red and white flag that symbolizes peace and justice in the Shia faith tradition.

North Carolina: An email was [sent](#) to the Islamic Center of Charlotte threatening: "every mosque from here to Bahrain will turn to dust." The email also stated: "You have no Islamic rights in this country, you're [sic] children and women are ours" and "No mayor, no city, county, state police, fbi, cia, [sic] or the military can stop me."

Bullying

Washington, D.C.: CAIR [contacted](#) the College Democrats of America (CDA) calling for a thorough investigation into complaints of widespread anti-Muslim bigotry within the organization. This came after CAIR received numerous complaints from Muslim and non-Muslim CDA members who have experienced or witnessed anti-Muslim bigotry within the organization.

Maryland: A fifth-grade child in Howard County was [bullied](#) following a class lesson on the September 11, 2001 attacks. The child, who was wearing a Muslim prayer cap, was allegedly instructed by his teacher to explain to the class "who was behind the attacks." After he attempted to describe the attackers as "Saudi nationals," students in the class started ridiculing him, chanting "you're Muslim like them." The incident reportedly "reduced him to tears" and led to him "fleeing the classroom."

New Mexico: A seventh-grade Muslim student was [bullied](#) over her religious headscarf, or hijab, at school. Her classmates reportedly called her a "terrorist" and taunted her with Islamophobic slurs. The school reportedly offered support following the incident.

New York: A Muslim student at La Guardia High School was allegedly [called](#) a "terrorist" by his teacher.

Texas: The Allen Independent School District [implemented](#) an educational curriculum that included anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim rhetoric. For example, a quiz question asks, "Which is an important cause of terrorism in

the Middle East?” the correct answer being, “Many Palestinians believe terrorism is justified against Israeli occupation.”

Pennsylvania: A Muslim high school student in Lansdale had her hijab [ripped](#) off by two other female students. The two attackers, both white students, allegedly harassed the student online for months, calling her “n**ger,” among other slurs. Her family reported the incident to the school, but said they did not receive any feedback. The family [notes](#) that a number of racist and Islamophobic incidents targeting the student have occurred over multiple years within the same school district.

New York: A 17-year-old Muslim student who wears hijab and is of Pakistani descent was reportedly [booed](#) and told “go back to Pakistan” by a parent while giving a graduation speech at the Wheatley School in Old Westbury. In the speech, the student

asked her classmates to seek out knowledge about international issues plaguing the world including the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and Uighur Muslims and global warming. During her speech, the student was also booed by parents who chanted, “We support Israel.” Afterward, parents harassed and bullied the student and her family. At one point, a parent was caught on video asking the student, “What about Hamas?”

New Jersey: A high-school teacher in Ridgefield allegedly [told](#) an Arab Muslim student, “We don’t negotiate with terrorists,” when he asked for more time on his homework. The teacher reportedly later approached the student and allegedly said, “I didn’t mean it like that.” The incident was reportedly witnessed by the entire class and another teacher.



Employment

Georgia: A federal discrimination charge was [filed](#) against Chipotle Mexican Grill Restaurant on behalf of a Somali-American Muslim woman. She was allegedly subjected to pervasive gender, racial, and religious discrimination during her employment with the fast-food chain.

Kansas: An assistant manager at the Chipotle Mexican Grill Restaurant in Lenexa allegedly [repeatedly harassed](#) and assaulted a female Muslim employee who wears the hijab or Islamic headscarf. Over the period of a month, the assistant manager reportedly asked the Muslim employee several times if he could see her hair, to which she responded that she wears the hijab for religious reasons and would not remove it. The Muslim employee was allegedly again approached by the assistant manager who reportedly forcibly ripped off her hijab.

A Somali-American Muslim woman was subjected to religious discrimination during her employment.

Flying While Muslim

Texas: A Southwest Airlines flight attendant in Dallas [denied](#) a Muslim woman who was born and raised in the United States a seat in an exit row, [reportedly stating](#) that she “couldn’t speak English and would bring the whole plane down in an emergency.” However, she allowed the victim’s sister who does not wear the hijab (Islamic headscarf) to sit in the same seat.

Texas: On a flight from Montana to Texas, a Mesa Airlines flight attendant [humiliated](#) a 34-year-old Muslim woman mid-flight for attempting to dispose of her daughter’s diaper in a bathroom garbage bin. After the Muslim woman filed the incident report, the flight attendant called her over the phone to tell her that she had been placed on a No-Fly List for “creating a biohazard.”

Missouri: A Muslim passenger was religiously [profiled](#) at Louis Lambert International Airport in St. Louis [because](#) his middle name is Mohammad. When he went back to the counter to ask for an explanation for what happened, he was told that it was because his middle name “Mohammad” was flagged. When the passenger continued to seek information about the incident, the Delta staffer called the police.

Hate Crimes/Bias Incidents

New York: A man allegedly [carried](#) out a series of three anti-Muslim attacks in July 2021. On July 25, the suspect harassed a 38-year-old Muslim woman in Queens, making several anti-Muslim remarks and pulling a knife on the woman. Five days before, the suspect allegedly carried out two anti-Muslim attacks targeting two couples in South Ozone Park. The assailant punched both couples, leaving an elderly woman with a fractured nose and cuts to her face and head.

New Jersey: In July 2021, Atlantic City 4th Ward Councilman MD Morshed was brutally [assaulted](#) after passing by a drug deal near Al Hera Mosque. Morshed, 47, allegedly entered into an altercation with the drug users in the parking lot after the evening prayer. He suffered from a broken nose and eye socket and underwent an operation to repair them.

Michigan: An African American Muslim woman was physically [assaulted](#) by a passenger while flying on Spirit Airlines on the twentieth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The assailant, who was white, called the Muslim woman a terrorist along with a number of profanities. When the assailant realized people were recording her Islamophobic comments, she allegedly punched the Muslim woman with her fist.

Texas: In October, an unarmed Moroccan man named Adil Dghoughi was allegedly [murdered](#) by a white property owner in Martindale. The 65-year-old white man reportedly shot the 31-year-old Moroccan national after seeing him parked in the driveway and deeming the

car suspicious. The victim was taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries, where he later died. The suspect was not arrested for the murder until eleven days after the fatal incident.

Massachusetts: A Muslim couple were victims of an alleged assault and hate crime in a Trader Joe's parking lot in Framingham. When the couple got out of the car, the assailant reportedly scratched the man's face and called his wife a "Muslim b****." The man also reportedly referred to the couple as "terrorists."



Arizona: A lawsuit was [filed](#) against the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) and Professor Nicholas Damask over a course curriculum that forced Muslim students to denigrate Islam, violating their First Amendment rights.

Maryland: The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) [notified](#) the community of an on-campus assault against a Muslim student. The alleged physical assault targeted the Muslim student who wears the hijab or Islamic headscarf. An unknown male reportedly ripped off her hijab in plain sight at the university's Commons building.

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Representative Andre Carson was [targeted](#) by a Capitol Hill coup terrorist suspect's threatening "good guy, bad guy" list. The suspect was arrested after the deadly Capitol coup attempt on January 6, 2021. Officials discovered eleven Molotov cocktails, explosive devices, an M4 carbine assault rifle, ammunition, and two handguns in his truck, along with handwritten messages. Although the handwritten note did not explicitly label Carson as "good" or "bad", it indicated that he is one of a small number of Muslims serving in the House.

New York: A Muslim man in an Albany store was [threatened](#) by an assailant with a rifle stating that he would murder him. The victim told officers that the suspect threatened him because of his religious identity.

Oregon: A 68-year-old Afghan worker in Portland was [harassed](#) with anti-Muslim slurs and pelted with items while working at a local gas station.

California: A Middle Eastern man was [berated and hit](#) with a laptop by a woman in Palo Alto. Reportedly, the man told the woman who hit him that he did not have money for her, to which she replied, "You don't belong in my country," and asked for his identification. A witness heard the woman cursing and calling him an immigrant.

Maryland: A Muslim man was [spat](#) on by his neighbor on April 18. The family reported to CAIR that over the course of two years, they have been subjected to racial/anti-immigrant slurs and told to "go back to where they came from." A death threat was also made against a member of the family.

New York: A 21-year-old Asian American Muslim woman in Long Island suffered an [acid attack](#). The victim, Nafiah Ikram, and her mother were walking home when an unknown individual threw battery acid in her face. Ikram suffered severe burns to her face, eyes, neck, and hands and spent fifteen days in the hospital.

California: A group of protesters were [pepper-sprayed](#) at a Fresno Rally. The suspect yelled "**** all of Palestine" and "we don't support Palestine" before he began spraying.

Virginia: Two Muslim women, who wear the Islamic headscarf (hijab), were [physically assaulted](#) while waiting to pick up their children after school in Northern Virginia. The suspect reportedly shoved, spat on, and slapped both women while making threatening statements and references to religion.

Ohio: An Uber driver was [allegedly physically attacked](#), harassed, and had his car vandalized by a belligerent passenger. The drunk passenger told the driver, “I hope to hell you get shot,” and called him the n-word. While getting out of the vehicle, the passenger vandalized the car and when asked to stop, told the Muslim driver to remember that “you are black and I am white.” The suspect proceeded to punch the driver in the shoulder and smear his blood all over the inside of the driver’s car.

New York: A 13-year-old Sikh American boy wearing a turban was the [target](#) of a violent assault and hate speech by a group of teenagers in Suffolk County. According to reports in the media, the boy was “punched in the face” as a group of teens hurled “racial slurs” at the boy and “called him Mohammed.” One of the boy’s 13-year-old attackers was [arrested](#) and charged with second-degree aggravated harassment.

New Jersey: The Palestinian American Community Center in Clifton [received](#) multiple violent threats by two separate callers. One of the callers threatened to bomb the Center and physically and sexually assault the staff. The center received around thirty threatening calls from both callers.

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar [received](#) an influx of online death threats after [criticizing](#) the human rights violations being committed in the Middle East.

Nevada: A man in Las Vegas is accused of [smearing](#) raw bacon on a Muslim family’s home and car. The family has been harassed by this same individual since January 2021. The suspect is being charged with harassment and stalking.

California: In July, an Arab American worker at King’s Drive-In restaurant was the [victim](#) of a hate crime and racially-motivated threat. He and his fellow employees were approached



by the suspect and questioned regarding their nationalities. When the victim answered that he was Arab, the suspect brandished a knife and revealed a desire to harm him and the other employees, whom he referred to as “terrorists.” The Bakersfield Police Department arrested the suspect, who had a pre-existing arrest warrant for violating the conditions of his post-release community supervision. He was arrested for criminal threats and the commission of a hate crime.

Maryland: In the Baltimore Pre-Trial Facility in Jessup, correctional officers [allegedly threw](#) away an inmate’s belongings including legal documents, clothes, and a Quran – Islam’s revealed text – and other Islamic and religious research and material. The Muslim inmate said that one of the officers, about whom he had previously filed complaints, threatened him with riot control fogger spray, which could be lethal for the inmate due to his asthma and inflamed tonsils. The Muslim inmate was not permitted to have his attorney or family members retrieve the items. When he complained about the trashing of his personal belongings and Quran, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) denied his claims.

Forcible Removal of Hijab:

California: A Muslim woman was stopped and [arrested](#) for speeding while she was traveling to National Sequoia Park to celebrate Eid, one of the holiest days for Muslims. The woman’s hijab was forcibly removed for a booking photo despite Tulare County Sheriff’s Department policies that allow religious attire. The policy explicitly states, “inmates wearing headscarves or other approved coverings shall not be required to remove

them while in the presence of or while visible to the opposite sex if they so desire.” Officers forced her to remain without her hijab for the duration of her detention and while in the presence of males. Her photo without hijab remains available in law enforcement databases.

Michigan: In September, a civil rights action was [taken](#) against the City of Ferndale for the forcible removal of a Muslim woman’s hijab, or Islamic headscarf, for a booking photo.

California: A Muslim woman of Somali origin in Santa Clara County was [reportedly forced](#) by deputies to remove her religious headscarf (hijab) while in custody.

**A Muslim woman
was stopped
and arrested for
speeding, Officers
forced her to
remain without
her hijab for the
duration of
her detention.**

Hate Speech

New York: Lori Maslow, the Kings County District Leader of the 41st Assembly District, [tweeted](#) that Palestinians will be "[wiped off the face of the earth.](#)"

Florida: The Communications Director at CAIR-Florida was threatened on Frontpage Magazine's website. The magazine is owned and run by notorious Islamophobe David Horowitz. The death threat read, "Self-hating puerto rican [sic]. An infidel, he should be beheaded."

New Jersey: The Edison School Board vice president Mohin Patel has a history of making anti-Muslim posts on Facebook. In a Facebook [post](#) from February 2021, Patel featured a comic that showed a Muslim man asking a Buddhist monk, "Why do you pray to a rock?" before showing the man praying to the Kaaba in Mecca. Patel is one of the Edison Eight – a group of eight individuals identified by the U.S. Postal Inspector as responsible for a racist 2017 mailer urging residents to "Make Edison Great Again" and warned "the Chinese and Indians are taking over our town."

Washington, D.C.: Greg Murphy [tweeted](#) an anti-Muslim statement in response to U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar, who tweeted her condolences for the officer killed in a car ramming attack on police in Washington,

D.C. Rep. Omar tweeted: "Heartbroken to learn another CP was killed while protecting the Capitol. My thoughts and prayers go out to the officer's family and the entire Capitol Police force. The death toll would have been worse if the assailant had an AR-15 instead of a knife." In the now-deleted tweet, U.S. Representative Murphy wrote: "Would have been worse @ Ilhan if they had been flying planes into the buildings also."

Washington, D.C.: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) [paid](#) for an advertisement on Facebook that displayed an image of U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar with rockets raining down on Israel in the background. The image falsely claimed that Omar called the Israeli targeting of Hamas an "act of terrorism." In actuality, Omar stated that Israeli airstrikes killing civilians in Gaza were acts of terrorism, and Palestinians deserve protection.

Washington, D.C.: Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene [posted](#) anti-Muslim tweets about Rep. Omar referring to the ongoing Israeli bombardment in Gaza. In

response to a tweet from Rep. Omar stating "Palestinian lives matter. Pass it On," Rep. Greene replied "Jewish lives matter. So tell your terrorist buddies in Hamas to stop bombing them. #JihadSquad." Both incidents were shameful attempts by AIPAC and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene to weaponize anti-Muslim bias and tropes to falsely associate Rep. Omar with terrorism.

**February 2021,
Patel featured a
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Idaho: CAIR [called](#) on the Ada County Commission to drop a sheriff nominee who expressed Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, racist, and sexist views. Nominee Doug Traubel's inflammatory social media posts and book, in which he claims Marxist values have eroded America, were discussed at length during his hour-long interview with the Ada County Commission. *The Idaho Statesman* [reported](#): "Commissioner Kendra Kenyon, of District 3, questioned Traubel about posts he has written about the number of Black men who rape white women; his support for the 'constitutional' sheriff movement; and comments that he wears a mask with 'hoax' written on it when traveling on airplanes, that 'Islam is the culture of death' and that single mothers are 'not an economically viable unit.'"

Intimidation

California: The Orange County District Attorney's (OCDA) office [received](#) complaints of rampant Islamophobic discrimination and sexual harassment within the office. An investigation revealed that a former senior assistant district attorney, Gary Logalbo, made Islamophobic comments to a Muslim deputy district attorney, including asking whether her father was a terrorist and calling a Muslim public defender a terrorist. He also allegedly engaged in a troubling pattern of sexual harassment toward multiple female employees.

New York: A Muslim-owned business in Nassau County was [targeted](#) with anti-Muslim vandalism. The owners of the business found the word "terrorist" written on their glass storefront.

Texas: In Austin, on the twentieth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks, a bloody pig's head mask and an anti-Muslim sign were [placed](#) in front of an Islamic Center/school. The sign read, "Muslims: you are as unclean to God as a pig is to you. Have your idolatry washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ."

Maryland: In Greenbelt, a Muslim family was the [target](#) of several alleged disturbing incidents. The daughter was parking her car in front of the home's driveway when a vehicle pulled up next to her; the driver reportedly stared at her in a menacing manner while blocking oncoming traffic. When the daughter, who wears an Islamic headscarf (hijab), rolled down her window, the woman in the other car called her a "terrorist," among other slurs and insults, and commented on her skin color and the hijab. The woman also allegedly threatened the daughter that "punishment is coming soon." This same Muslim family allegedly experienced a pattern of other incidents over the course of a few months, including damage to the irrigation system in their front yard, slashed tires on their vehicles, and nails and screws placed on their driveway.

The Terrorist Watchlist and the No-Fly List: An Analysis

“Federal agencies—like the FBI and TSA—started suspect lists and ‘No-Fly Lists,’ many times, just because of the way someone’s name sounded or was spelled. And once someone’s name was on those lists, it could be a nightmare to get a name removed,”

-U.S. Representative Andre Carson testifying before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee

On March 1, 2022, the U.S. House Judiciary Committee held a groundbreaking hearing on [“Discrimination and the Civil Rights of the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian American Communities.”](#) While the hearing covered a wide range of interrelated civil liberties issues, one issue critical to the American Muslim community that usually receives little to no attention in Congress was spotlighted: the federal government’s unconstitutional Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB),

commonly referred to as the “terrorism watchlist.”

Over the past 20 years, the watchlist has grown to include more than 1.6 million names. CAIR has mounted a nationwide legal challenge to the government’s watchlisting program because there is no meaningful way to remove the names of those wrongfully placed on the list – which can lead to difficulty traveling for innocent people.

In addition to being used to track and limit the movements of American citizens and residents, the FBI has used the threat of being added to the watchlist (or dangling the possibility of being removed from it) to compel Muslims to spy and report on their families, friends, student groups, and houses of worship.

American Muslims targeted by the watchlisting system are [designated](#) as “known or suspected terrorists” without any semblance of due process. Most often, Muslims find themselves [subjected](#) to



extraordinary and discriminatory screenings while passing through TSA and CBP checkpoints at airports and the border. The “Selectee List” and “No-Fly List” are subcomponents of the larger TSDB.

Being included in the TSDB [subjects](#) a person to segregated and enhanced processes and interrogations while traveling, places their safety at risk during routine encounters with law enforcement, results in indefinite delays in the processing of immigration applications and visas, makes them ineligible to obtain various permits, licenses, and employment opportunities, and restricts them from seeking certain kinds of employment or government benefits.

Over the years, CAIR has uncovered that the federal government disseminates the statuses of those on the watchlist not only to federal and 18,000 state law enforcement agencies, but also to 500 private companies, hospitals, universities, and every law enforcement agency in the U.S., and to 60 foreign governments.

The watchlisting system has demonized and stigmatized the Muslim community. Federal agents have arrested and handcuffed many listees, often at gunpoint and sometimes in front of their children. Customs officers have searched and seized their phones and computers as a matter of policy. At the airport, federal agents repeatedly disrupt listees’

travel plans with prolonged, frightening, and invasive detentions, screenings, and interrogations.

Some Muslims targeted by the watchlisting system have been denied the right to even board their flights. Others have been subjected to intrusive interrogations about their religious beliefs and practices. All of these consequences are attributable to the watchlist and the various annotations that accompany the entries on it.

Usually, the watchlist operates under the radar of Congress and the White House. The reasons Congress does not address the watchlist are twofold.

First, there is a disappointingly bi-partisan reluctance to provide congressional oversight to this program. Authorized by the Bush administration, it has largely operated unaltered by Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden – existing without a congressional mandate. In other words, while they have a duty to provide

congressional oversight, it is easier to act like it is not their problem.

Second, there is a persistent fear among elected officials that if they reform the watchlist by adopting new laws that better protect and respect the rights of all U.S. citizens and residents, including Muslims, they will be vulnerable to electoral challengers for being “weak on national security.”

A federal district court ruled the watchlist unconstitutional, citing harm the secret program has caused to numerous American citizens.



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The success of the federal government's watchlist program depends upon secrecy and eliminating due process protections for individuals the government seeks to target. CAIR attorneys have found the quickest way to get off the watchlist is not to file a redress complaint through the Department of Homeland Security's Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP), the formal process to seek removal, but to sue the government. The government is more likely to remove someone from the watchlist than be compelled to justify in federal court why they think an individual should be on it.

Recent CAIR Watchlist Advocacy and Legal Actions

In April 2022, an [in-depth report](#) by the National Investigative Unit of Hearst Television revealed that Amtrak has asked, and TSA has agreed, to screen passengers against the terrorist watchlist—a list with more than one million innocent people on it, almost all of

whom are Muslim. The program is part of the Amtrak Rail Passenger Threat Assessment and would compare personal passenger information from Amtrak—which may later include a traveler's social media profiles—to the government's terrorist screening database.

CAIR responded by calling on Amtrak and the TSA to abandon an illegal expansion of a secret government watchlist—which has been repeatedly challenged by CAIR and other civil rights organizations—to screen passengers. CAIR has publicly pledged to file a lawsuit if the expansion goes forward.

In 2019, a federal district court ruled the watchlist unconstitutional, citing harm the secret program has caused to numerous American citizens placed on the list without any clear recourse. However, in March 2021, three judges—two appointed by President Trump and one appointed by President Bush—overturned that ruling. In the same month, CAIR also [requested the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to review](#) this decision.



In February, CAIR [announced](#) a lawsuit against CBP and its agents at Dulles International Airport for repeatedly seizing an individual's electronic devices. The lawsuit asserts that CBP agents took these actions, not because of any suspicion of illegal activity, but only because a computer instructed them to. The plaintiff in the lawsuit is a Somali American living in Northern Virginia who heads a major company in Somalia that drills water wells, handles logistics for international organizations like the Red Cross, and, for decades, helped deliver humanitarian aid to starving people in his homeland on behalf of the United Nations World Food Program.

For some people, like the plaintiff filing this lawsuit, the secret status assigned to them means that each time they travel overseas, federal agents will be waiting to seize their electronic devices upon return to the United States. The officials that oversee the watchlisting system use the information seized to assign more people secret statuses.

Key Recommendations

Hate and Bias Incidents

- President Biden and members of Congress should actively condemn anti-Muslim bias incidents and hate crimes when they occur and reinforce that Islamophobia is not an American value.
- Federal law enforcement should aggressively prosecute unlawful acts of anti-Muslim hate crimes when local law enforcement fails to act.
- Congress should adopt legislation making federal funding for local law enforcement agencies contingent on those agencies documenting and reporting hate crimes to the FBI's national database.
- CAIR knows that anti-Muslim bias incidents targeting the community continue to be underreported to both law enforcement and American Muslim community institutions.
- Therefore, CAIR urges Muslim leaders to better educate the Muslim community on the need to report anti-Muslim bias incidents and requests Muslim community members report any bias incidents to police and to CAIR's Civil Rights Department at 202-742-6420 or by filing a report at: <http://www.cair.com/report>.
- CAIR also urges members of the American Muslim community to request a copy of CAIR's safety and security guidelines for mosques and other Islamic institutions. CAIR's safety guidelines, which include recommendations drafted by a leading security consultant, are designed to be used by mosque officials, Muslim school administrators, and other community leaders and activists who seek to identify and eliminate vulnerabilities to bias-motivated attacks.
- Muslims and allies can also request CAIR to host a local Bystander Intervention Training. The objective of this training, in light of the recent uptick in hate crime incidents, is to teach situational awareness and empower participants to safely intervene in case they find themselves in such a scenario.



Law Enforcement and Government Overreach

- Adopt a TSDB (Terrorist Screening Database) inclusion standard that precludes innocent people—persons who have not been arrested, charged, or convicted of a terrorism-related offense—from being listed in the TSDB.
- End the dissemination of the TSDB to foreign governments, private individuals and corporations, and state and local police officers.
- Reject any new domestic terrorism statutes. The U.S. already has enough laws to investigate or charge those who plan or carry out politically motivated acts of violence or hate.
- End the FBI’s use of informants to spy on American Muslim communities.
- Law enforcement must take the necessary steps to build trust with the American Muslim community by acknowledging their past and ongoing harms. Community trust is not rebuilt overnight, and small policy changes will not solve a systemic problem that has persisted for decades.
- CAIR calls on the U.S. Senate to pass the House adopted George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which would be an important first step in addressing the systemic problem of police killings, violence, and profiling targeting Black Americans.
- CAIR urges the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security to adopt the following systematic reforms:

- End discriminatory loopholes in federal guidance regarding the use of racial and religious profiling by federal law enforcement agencies.
- Create a centralized database that documents excessive use of force by law enforcement.
- Require the equal treatment of the American Muslim community by federal law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Anti-BDS/Free Speech

- Support the free speech of all Americans and the right to boycott without government interference. At the federal level, Congress continues to consider the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” a law that would effectively criminalize and penalize certain types of free speech on BDS and has already adopted anti-BDS movement resolutions.

Incarceration Rights

- Work with Congress to fundamentally reform the Prison Litigation Reform Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a) (“PLRA”) to protect incarcerated’ constitutional right for equal access to the courts. The PLRA was enacted by Congress in 1996 for the purpose of restricting the ability of incarcerated to file lawsuits challenging their confinement conditions. As a result, the PLRA has resulted in de facto immunity that has allowed correctional facilities to engage in widespread and egregious civil rights violations against incarcerated while escaping accountability and liability.

Immigration and Travel

- Work with Congress to repeal the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015, re-evaluate all countries currently designated by the federal government under the VWP, and end all other discriminatory anti-Muslim “extreme vetting programs.”
- Restore and enhance protections for asylum seekers and refugees, halt the detention of asylum seekers and other abusive practices, invest in refugee resettlement programs, and invest in humane alternatives to detention of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Dismantle the TSA’s secretive Quiet Skies passenger tracking program, its international counterpart Silent Partner, and other rules-based lists, all of which operate without Congressional oversight to single out law-abiding Muslim travelers for official harassment and extrajudicial consequences without due process.
- Repair the damage done by the Trump administration to the U.S. immigration system by reversing restrictions on the ability to travel and immigrate to the United States.

School Incidents

- Support federal and state departments of education efforts to adopt policy reforms to address religious-based bullying in schools.

Conclusion

In this report, we provided a comprehensive review of the status of American Muslim civil rights and the structural impact of Islamophobia. The purpose of this report was to illustrate the severe presence of Islamophobia and its impact on our society. The first section provided a detailed breakdown of the total complaints CAIR received in 2021. Last year, CAIR recorded a total of 6,720 complaints nationwide involving a range of issues including immigration and travel, workplace discrimination, denial of public accommodations, law enforcement and government overreach, hate and bias incidents, incarcerated rights, school incidents, and anti-BDS/free speech.

In the next section of the report, we provided an analysis of our data to help explain the increase in complaints in almost all areas of reporting. For example, we recorded 2,823 immigration and travel-related complaints in 2021. These included reports relating to the Afghan immigration crisis, citizenship, asylum, CBP and USCIS, airline profiling incidents, the No-Fly List, and the Muslim Ban. The increase in immigration complaints was attributed largely to the Afghan immigration crisis, for which CAIR offices were contacted regarding urgent and immediate assistance in humanitarian parole, Special Immigrant Visa applications, and other immigration-related issues.

We then provided examples of case summaries illustrating the effects of anti-Muslim bias on the everyday lives of American Muslims across the United States. For instance, the Umar Al-Farooq Masjid in Mountlake Terrace was broken into and vandalized by a man and woman who allegedly desecrated religious

items in the mosque, including Qurans, Islam's holy book. The attack was caught on security camera footage and showed the individuals tossing the mosque's Qurans and other religious items into garbage bags before throwing them away in a nearby dumpster.

In the following section, we provided an overview of the FBI's terrorist watchlist and the No-Fly List to demonstrate the presence of anti-Muslim bias embedded in the watchlist as well as the lack of transparency to determine who is placed on such lists. Moreover, we point out how the government has made consistent errors in placing individuals on the watchlist based on questionable and inaccurate information with a flawed review process. To this day, the government refuses to disclose the standards it uses to place people on the No-Fly List, which prevents individuals from boarding a flight indefinitely.

Last, we offered key recommendations to remedy civil rights challenges facing American Muslim communities. For example, to help us have a more holistic understanding of hate crimes impacting the Muslim community, we suggest that Congress adopt legislation making federal funding for local law enforcement agencies contingent on those agencies documenting and reporting hate crimes to the FBI's national database.

As the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, we will continue to fight on your behalf in the courtroom, advocate with you, and hold all agencies and actors accountable to provide an equal assessment when underrepresented minorities are victims of hate crimes. Our work at CAIR will not end here. This is merely the beginning.



Civil Rights **Report 2022**

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