

# **CAIR Action Alert**

**Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)**

**Alert 372**

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## **CAIR MUSLIM COMMUNITY SAFETY KIT** Step-by-step guide to community safety if America attacks Iraq

**(WASHINGTON, D.C., 3/17/03)** – As it becomes increasingly clear that America will attack Iraq in the next few days, CAIR has put together a “Muslim Community Safety Kit” for Muslims, Arab-Americans and those perceived to be “Middle Eastern” who may be targeted by religious or ethnic profiling or bias-related hate crimes. According to the FBI: “A U.S. war with Iraq or another terrorist attack could trigger a wave of hate crimes against Muslims and Arab-Americans in the United States.” (Associated Press, 3/12/03)

Dear Imam, activist, community leader, brother or sister: As-salaamu alaykum. Peace be to you. This “Muslim Community Safety Kit” has been developed to assist you and your community in the event of a war against Iraq and any resulting anti-Muslim backlash. The 9-page kit is designed to better equip you with the knowledge necessary to protect against anti-Muslim or anti-Arab bigotry or attacks, and to secure your basic legal rights. Below are suggestions for pro-active steps you can take.

### HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE KIT:

1. Read this kit carefully.
2. Circulate to your friends and family.
3. Photocopy relevant portions and post in your local mosque, Islamic center or organization.
4. Contact CAIR if you have any questions, or if you do not understand any part of this kit.

### MUSLIM COMMUNITY SAFETY KIT TABLE OF CONTENTS:

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## REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Muslims must do their part to ensure the safety and security of our nation. If anyone notes suspicious persons or activities in their community, they should report it immediately to the local Field Office of the FBI. SEE: <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>

## DEVELOP A LEGAL CONTACT LIST

Develop a list of attorneys who are willing to be consulted by the Muslim community in response to backlash incidents. Ask Muslim attorneys to volunteer their services to community members during this time of crisis.

## DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Community leaders should immediately coordinate meetings between representatives of the Muslim community and local state and national law enforcement agencies. These meetings should focus on ways in which the community can help national security and on how authorities can protect Muslims and Arab-Americans from harassment and discrimination.

## MEET WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Delegations of Muslim representatives should schedule meetings with local, state and national elected representatives or their key staff to discuss community concerns. To find out who represents your area on the national level, go to: <http://www.capwiz.com/cair/home/>

## BUILDING COALITIONS WITH INTERFAITH AND MINORITY GROUPS

Similar meetings should be coordinated with representatives of local interfaith and minority groups. These meetings should focus on building lines of communication and support, and hearing from these groups how they deal with discrimination and bigotry.

## MEET WITH LOCAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO DISCUSS STUDENT SAFETY

Representatives of the Muslim community should meet with local school administrators to discuss safety plans for students and to sensitize the administrators to harassment of Muslim students.

Ask for a “zero tolerance” policy for harassment of Muslim students. An example of a letter that a school board might send to local school administrators may be found at: <http://www.cair-florida.org/ViewArticle.asp?Code=PR&ArticleID=73>

Obtain copies of CAIR’s “Educator’s Guide to Islamic Religious Practices” by contacting CAIR or e-mailing: [publications@cair-net.org](mailto:publications@cair-net.org)

## BUILDING AN EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

Community leaders should develop emergency e-mail and phone contact lists to be used in case of an incident that threatens the community's safety. Local imams, Islamic center board members, and Muslim activists should be on the lists.

A second list should be developed containing contact information for all local law enforcement agencies.

## HOLD A COMMUNITY MEETING TO INFORM OTHERS OF SAFETY GUIDELINES

Call for a meeting of the local Muslim community to discuss the information outlined in this kit. The meeting should take place at a local mosque or Islamic center and should be advertised using the emergency contact list.

## ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Establish a network of community members who can offer emotional and material support to those who may be the victims of hate crimes or discrimination. Victims should not be left alone to deal with the negative impact of such incidents.

## REACTING TO INCIDENTS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

If you believe you have been the victim of an anti-Muslim hate crime or discrimination, you should:

1. Report the incident to your local police station and FBI office IMMEDIATELY. Ask that the incident be treated as a hate crime. Ask witnesses to give you their name and contact information.
2. Inform CAIR even if you believe it is a "small" incident. Incidents may be reported online at: <http://www.cair-net.org/ireport/> or TEL: 202-488-8787, FAX: 202-488-0833, E-MAIL: [cair@cair-net.org](mailto:cair@cair-net.org)
3. Document the incident. Write down exactly what was said and/or done by the offender. Save evidence. Take photographs.
4. Act quickly. Each incident must be dealt with when it happens, not when convenient.
5. Decide on the appropriate action to be taken. Consider issuing a statement from community leaders, holding a news conference, organizing a protest, meeting with officials, or starting a letter writing campaign.
6. Mobilize community support. Contact CAIR and a local mosque or organization.
7. Stay on top of the situation.
8. Announce results. When the incident is resolved, make an announcement to the same people and organizations originally contacted.

## REACTING TO ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION

1. Remain calm.
  2. Report the discrimination to the appropriate authorities and to CAIR.
  3. Document the discrimination. Save memos. Keep a detailed journal. Note the presence of witnesses. Keep copies of all correspondence. Create a "paper trail."
  4. Ask witnesses to give you their name and contact information.
  5. Consider contacting a lawyer.
- Take steps to increase security of your local mosque, Islamic center or school.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYEE

Federal law makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee on the basis of religion, race, or national origin. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act guarantees your right to:

- 1) Reasonable religious accommodation. The failure of an employer to reasonably accommodate your religious practices constitutes discrimination. "Religious practices" includes wearing a beard, hijab, prayer on the job, and going to Jumah prayer.
- 2) Fairness in hiring, firing, and promotions. Your employer is prohibited from considering religion when making decisions affecting your employment status.
- 3) A non-hostile work environment. Your employer must ensure that you are not subjected to anti-Muslim insults, harassment or unwelcome, excessive proselytizing.
- 4) Complain about discrimination without fear of retaliation. Federal law guarantees your right to report an act of alleged discrimination. It is illegal for your employer to retaliate against you for your complaint.

## WHEN FACED WITH DISCRIMINATION ON THE JOB

- 1) Remain calm.
- 2) Inform the offending party that you believe his/her actions are discriminatory.
- 3) Report the discriminatory action in writing to company management.
- 4) Begin documenting the discrimination by saving memos, keeping a detailed journal, noting the presence of witnesses, and making written complaints (keep copies). Create a "paper trail."
- 5) Contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and local county or state civil rights agencies to educate yourself about legal options.
- 6) Contact an attorney to discuss your case.
- 7) DO NOT sign any documents or resign without an attorney's advice.
- 8) Ask to be transferred to another department or job site.
- 9) Ask for mediation.
- 10) Contact CAIR to file a report.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS AN AIRLINE PASSENGER

As an airline passenger, you are entitled to courteous, respectful and non-stigmatizing treatment by airline and security personnel. You have the right to complain about treatment that you believe is discriminatory. If you believe you have been treated in a discriminatory manner, immediately:

- 1) Ask to speak to a supervisor.
- 2) Ask if you have been singled out because of your looks, dress, race, ethnicity, faith, or national origin.
- 3) Ask for the names and ID numbers of all persons involved in the incident.
- 4) Ask witnesses to give you their names and contact information.
- 5) Write down a statement of facts immediately after the incident. Be sure to include the flight number, the flight date, and the name of the airline.
- 6) Contact CAIR to file a report.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A STUDENT

1. You have the right to inform others about your religion. You have the right to pass out literature or speak to others about Islam, as long as it is not done in a disruptive manner.
2. You have the right to wear religious clothing. You also have the right to wear clothing with a religious message, as long as other clothes with messages are allowed.
3. You have the right to organize student-led prayer on campus, as long as the service is not disruptive.
4. You may have the right to attend Friday prayer. The Supreme Court has upheld the right of states to allow students “release time” to attend religious classes or services.
5. You have the right to be excused from school for religious holidays. You should inform the school that you will be absent.
6. You have the right to be excused from class discussions or activities that you find religiously objectionable.
7. You have the right to form an extracurricular Muslim student group.

## CAIR MOSQUE SECURITY GUIDELINES

### Areas of Vulnerability:

- \* Mosques located in isolated areas.
- \* Mosques left unattended for extended periods of time.
- \* Mosques with unsecured doors and/or windows.
- \* Absence of a burglar alarm system.
- \* Heavy exterior vegetation (shrubs, etc.) in which criminals may hide.
- \* Absence of exterior lighting.

### Take the following safety measures:

- \* Build good relationships with neighbors of the mosque. Invite them to visit your center.
- \* Try to have people attend the mosque as much as possible. Activity deters perpetrators.
- \* Make an appointment with the community relations officer of your local police department to tour your center and make suggestions on improving mosque security.
- \* Request additional police patrols in the vicinity of your center. Special attention should be paid to times of darkness and during prayers.
- \* Consider creating a security committee at your mosque.
- \* Post mosque members at entrances and parking areas during prayer times.
- \* Report suspicious packages to police. Do not touch them.
- \* Install perimeter floodlights outside the mosque.
- \* Install fire and burglar alarm systems.
- \* Replace hollow core doors with more secure solid doors.
- \* Install burglarproof bars on screens and large vents. (Note - Research local ordinances before beginning security renovations. For example, window bars should not limit evacuation in case of fire.)
- \* Trim shrubs and vines to reduce areas of concealment.
- \* Participate in neighborhood watch programs.
- \* Document descriptions of suspicious people or vehicles.
- \* Make duplicates of all important papers, computer disks and records.
- \* Remove potential fire hazards, such as trash and debris.
- \* Consider installing security cameras.

## RESPONDING TO BOMB THREATS

1. Distribute written instructions on handling bomb threats.
2. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask that the message be repeated. Record or write down everything that is said.
3. Ask for the location of the bomb.
4. Inform the caller that the detonation of a bomb could hurt many innocent people.
5. Pay attention to background noises such as music, which may give a clue to the caller's location.
6. Listen closely to the caller's voice. Make note of accents, voice quality (calm, excited) or speech impediments.
7. Report the threat immediately to the local police, ATF and FBI. Have appropriate phone numbers listed in written instructions.
8. If the threat comes in the form of a letter, save all materials, including the envelope. Handle the letter as little as possible.
9. Search the interior and exterior of the mosque. Evacuate the building if a suspicious package or device is found.

### Cautionary Notes

- A. Do not approach or challenge a suspicious person or vehicle.
- B. Do not pursue vehicles or suspects.
- C. Observe and report. You have no police powers.
- D. Conduct watch patrols in pairs.
- E. Conduct watches in a random fashion.

**BOMB THREAT CHECK LIST (Keep near phone in case of threatening calls.)**

Time of call:

Date:

Exact words of caller:

Person receiving call:

Call Reported to:

**Questions to Ask**

When is the bomb going to explode?

Where is the bomb?

What kind of bomb is it?

What will cause it to explode?

Why did you place the bomb?

What is your name?

**Caller's Voice**

adult	male	female	child	
calm	disguised	nasal	angry	stutter
slow	sincere	lisp	rapid	giggling
deep	crying	loud	squeaky	excited
stressed	accent	slurred	normal	

What were the background noises, if any?

## SUSPECT LETTERS AND PACKAGES

- What to look for:
- Name and title of addressee are not accurate.
- No return address, or the sender is not known to the addressee.
- Handwriting is distorted.
- Unprofessionally wrapped, uneven, bulky, lopsided.
- Contains bulges or soft spots.
- Poorly wrapped package is marked "Fragile-Handle With Care," "Rush," or has unusual restrictions such as "Personal" or "Private."
- Excess amount of postage.
- Protruding wires or tin foil.
- Package makes a buzzing or ticking noise, a sloshing sound, or emits an odor.

What to do:

DON'T open the package or letter.

DON'T put it in water or in a confined space such as a drawer.

DO isolate the article and secure the immediate area.

DO open windows if possible to help vent potential explosive gases.

DO contact your local police department and Postal Inspector.

### Suspect Description

Sex:

Race:

Age:

Height:

Weight:

Hair:

Glasses:

Complexion:

Scars/Marks/Tattoos:

Hat:

Clothing:

Shoes:

Auto type:

Auto color:

Auto license:

Direction of travel:

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IF CONTACTED BY THE FBI

American Muslims support strong law enforcement. We also treasure civil rights. Your right to be politically active or to hold different beliefs/views is protected by the Constitution. If you are visited by the FBI, remember:

1. Never lie or provide false information to the FBI. Lying to an FBI agent is a crime.
2. You have no obligation to talk to the FBI, even if you are not a citizen. Refusing to answer questions cannot be held against you. It does not imply that you have something to hide.
3. You do not have to permit them to enter your home. FBI agents must possess a search warrant in order to enter your home. If they say they have a warrant, demand to see it before allowing them to enter. Even if they have a warrant, you are under no obligation to answer questions. ALWAYS have an attorney present when answering questions.
4. Contact CAIR and an attorney for advice.

### CAIR LOCAL CHAPTERS

CAIR National, (202) 488-8787  
E-Mail: [cair@cair-net.org](mailto:cair@cair-net.org)

CAIR Arizona, (602) 262-2247  
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