

Secretary Janet Napolitano
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

May 13th, 2009

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We are living in a time where change is part of who we are as Americans. We live in a country that doesn't just tolerate diversity, but thrives on it. Therefore it is with this great hope that we implore you to overturn a decision that has broken up a family which includes four innocent children and shocked the Muslim community of Houston, Texas.

The Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) has refused to allow Imam Zoubir Bouchikhi, a Muslim scholar and teacher, to be released on bond while his case is reviewed before an immigration judge. This scholar has been jailed for 150 days. ICE has major discretionary powers outside the supervision of a judge and jury system and this authority gives ICE an enormous level of discretion in what happens to the Imam. In this case ICE is treating the Imam as an arriving alien without visas when in fact this person has lived in the US legally for more than 10 years, three of his 4 minor children are US citizens, he owns property in the US, and is an asset to this country with no criminal history of any kind. This unwarranted action by ICE is resulting in cruel and unjustified punishment for Imam Zoubir, his minor children and his community.

The Imam's detention is costing the tax payers many thousands of dollars. He is not a threat to anyone and not a flight risk, yet ICE refuses to release him on bond or allow an immigration judge to determine his custody.

On March 17th, 2009 after more than 90 days of incarceration ICE issued a statement informing that a bond in amount of \$20,000.00 was set for his release. This decision brought much joy to his wife, minor children and the community who expected his imminent release. The next day attempts to post bond were unsuccessful because ICE decided to delay his release supposedly based on advice from Washington DC. This reversal of decision to release on bond devastated his family particularly his children

His innocent minor children want to know why they are deprived of their father's love and care. His community has no answers. The decision to detain this Imam is a gross misjudgment that goes against everything this country stands for. It is for this reason that we need a change to be made and the diversity of our Imam to be understood and appreciated. We need our Imam and his children need their father, this is why we all need closure to this issue with the release of Imam Zoubir Bouchikhi.

Respectfully,

Signature

Address

Name

Issues to be emphasized in writing personal letters, sending emails and posting comments online:

1. The Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) has refused to allow a Muslim scholar to be released on bond while his case is reviewed before an immigration judge. This scholar has been unjustly jailed for more than 100 days now.
2. ICE has major discretionary powers which are outside the supervision of a judge and jury system and this unchecked authority makes ICE the judge, jury and the executioner all at the same time.
3. In this case ICE without any leniency or consideration of the special circumstances of this case is treating the Imam as an arriving alien without visas when in fact this person has lived in the US legally for more than 10 years, three of his 4 minor children are US citizens, owns property in US is an asset to this country has no criminal history of any kind. The last time he travelled outside the country for a short period of time with travel documents was more than three years ago. How anyone can categorize him as an illegal arriving alien in light of the facts is a blatant deficiency in the existing law that is just wrong.
4. The Imam's detention is costing the tax payers many thousands of dollars. The Correction Corporation of America, a private corporation; that houses the detainees charges the US government a significant amount for detaining each detainee on a daily basis. He is no threat to any one and not a flight risk yet ICE refuses to release him on bond or allow an immigration judge determine his custody.
5. His continued incarceration has been a major hardship on his family, deprived the Muslim community access to their religious scholar and sends the wrong message to the Muslims of our nation and the world.
6. The decision to detain this Imam is a gross misjudgment that goes against everything this country stands for and is not in public's interest.
7. His innocent minor children want to know why they are deprived of their father's love and care. His community has no answers.
8. His continued incarceration has been a major hardship on his family and has deprived the Muslim community access to their religious scholar, sending the wrong message to the Muslims of our nation and the world. To make matters worse on March 17th, 2009 after more than 90 days of incarceration ICE issued a statement informing that a bond (in amount of \$20,000.00) was set for his release. This decision brought much joy to his wife, young children and community which expected his imminent release. The next day's attempts to post bond were unsuccessful because ICE decided to delay his release based on advice from Washington DC. This reversal of decision to release on bond devastated his family, especially his children.



Additional contacts

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