

UN Commission on Human Rights
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Geneva

Agenda Item 14 (B): Minorities
Intervention by

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Mr. Chairman,

The International Human Rights Association of American Minorities would like to draw the Commission's attention to the situation of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, which has been affected by the tragic events of September 11th in New York.

First, let me emphasize that IHRAAM joins the many countries and organizations worldwide in condemnation of the attacks on innocent civilians in New York City, and in our expressions of sympathy and condolence to the families of the victims.

It is IHRAAM's view that no events in the world should be viewed as taking place in isolation, as if they neither derived from past events, nor precipitated subsequent events. We wish to raise for the Commission's attention the fact that the September 11th events have had wide-ranging impact on members of Muslim minorities in numerous non-Muslim countries since that time, due to the fact that Muslims have, correctly or incorrectly, been linked to the September 11th events by most of the non-Muslim world.

Anti-Muslim reaction has been reflected in acts of official policy as well as in random acts of individuals or groups against Muslim individuals or properties in a range of countries. Official acts of discrimination have included racial profiling at airports, curtailment of legitimate businesses and charities, detention without charge, renewed and discriminatory scrutiny related to immigration, deportations and interrogations without probable cause. In the United States, thousands of suspected terrorists, mainly of Middle Eastern and North African origin, have been detained in the absence of evidence.

In particular, as noted in the article “Anti-terrorism laws singling out Arab Americans destroy trust” by Imad Hamad of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee appearing in the *Detroit Free Press* on November 23, 2001, the USA’s Patriot Act and proposed Michigan Anti-Terrorist Act “severely limit judicial review of executive actions; eliminate the attorney-client privilege and basic due process rights for some suspects; legitimize indefinite detentions without process or appeal; vastly increase secret searches, seizures, surveillance, eavesdropping and wiretapping; and create crimes based on guilt by association.”

Writing in the British newspaper, *The Guardian* on January 24, 2002, Faisal Bodi notes: “Despite the government's insistence that there is no direct terrorist threat to Britain, a creeping totalitarian tendency is gnawing at our basic human rights safe guards. Now an individual, if he is not a British citizen, can be arrested simply for what he believes and the company he keeps. He can be punished without proof of guilt. He will be denied the benefit of any doubt. And his wider community will be singled out for collective punishment...”

On the individual or random level, the Washington-based Council on American Islamic Relations reports that there have been 1717 anti-Muslim incidents occurring in the US since September 11th, of which 11 were deaths, and 289 concerned physical abuse or abuse of property, and 224 acts of FBI or police intimidation. In the United Kingdom, the Islamic Human Rights Commission report of 2001 documented 88 incidents of serious violence, of which 52 were directed against individuals, and 36 against mosques or Islamic centers.

As a result of such various wide-ranging responses targeting Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, a widely noted climate of distrust and worsening of relations is being fostered between the targeted Muslim communities and non-Muslim governments and communities. Understandably enough, the targeted minorities have appreciable concerns related to their civil rights, and even their financial well-being and physical safety.

This in turn is reflected in events such as the recent meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on April 5-7th, 2002 of African American (indigenous) Islamic religious leaders from all sectors of the United States. The gathering concluded a Declaration of Confederation pledging mutual economic and social cooperation between the Jama'at under the leadership of Amir Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin and the Jama'at of Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' in Amerikkka under the leadership of Amir Muhammad Shareef, and agreeing, inter alia, to seek international recognition for their Confederation and work towards the right to internal self-determination.

We request that the Commission take note of these activities, particularly those related to the efforts of indigenous Muslims to achieve minority rights protection.