

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-seeks-probe-of-whether-fbi-sought-torture-of-u-s-muslim/

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

(WASHINGTON, D.C., 4/17/12) The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) today called on the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division to investigate whether an American Muslim citizen detained last year in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was tortured at the behest of the FBI.

In its letter to the DOJ, CAIR cites an exclusive report by *Mother Jones* magazine about the case of Yonas Fikre, an Oregon Muslim who was detained and tortured while visiting the UAE last June. The letter was also signed by Fikres attorney Thomas Nelson.

[MEDIA ADVISORY: Yonas Fikre will take part in a news conference about his case on April 18 in Stockholm, Sweden, at 4 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time. For more information, contact Thomas Nelson, 503-709-6397, E-Mail: nelson@thnelson.com or CAIR Staff Attorney Gadeir Abbas, 202-742-6410, 720-251-0425, E-Mail: gabbas@cair.com]

Fikre reports that he was beaten on the soles of his feet, kicked and punched, and held in stress positions while interrogators demanded he cooperate and barked questions that were eerily similar to those posed to him not long before by FBI agents and other American officials who had requested a meeting with him.

According to Fikres lawyer: When Yonas [first] asked whether the FBI was behind his detention, he was beaten for asking the question. Toward the end, the interrogator indicated that indeed the FBI had been involved.

Fikre said he had previously rejected an FBI demand that he act as an informant. He is currently seeking asylum in Sweden because he fears what U.S. officials may do to him if he returns.

CAIR: [American Muslim Alleges FBI Had a Hand in His Torture](#)

This disturbing case fits a pattern of proxy detention in which American Muslims are detained in other nations or prevented from returning home in a manner that is clearly designed to circumvent their constitutional rights, said CAIR Staff Attorney Gadeir Abbas and Thomas Nelson in their letter to the DOJ.

The letter also seeks assurances from the FBI that Fikres constitutional right to counsel be respected and his safety guaranteed should he return to the United States.

Abbas noted that earlier this year, CAIR called on the DOJ to investigate acts of coercion and intimidation allegedly used by the FBI's Portland Field Office to pressure Muslim citizens into giving up their constitutional rights if they wished to return to the United States from overseas. Fikre is originally from Portland.

CAIR [Asks DOJ to Probe Oregon FBI's Coercion of Muslim Citizens](#)

Video: [CAIR Says Portland FBI is Coercing Muslims to Give Up Rights](#)

Last year, CAIR filed a lawsuit against the DOJ and the FBI seeking a court order to allow a Virginia Muslim teenager who had been detained in Kuwait and placed on a U.S. government no-fly list to return to the United States.

CAIR: [Va. Muslim on No-Fly List Returning to U.S.](#)

CAIR Complaint [for Injunctive and Declaratory Relief](#)

CAIR has assisted a number of other American Muslim citizens who have been stranded overseas by government actions.

CAIR: [Embassy Returns Passport to U.S. Muslim Stuck in Kuwait](#)

CAIR Video: [FBI Prevents Va. Muslim from Returning to U.S.](#)

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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CONTACT: CAIR Staff Attorney Gadeir Abbas, 202-742-6410, 720-251-0425, E-Mail: gabbas@cair.com; CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, 202-744-7726, E-Mail: ihooper@cair.com; CAIR Communications Coordinator Amina Rubin, 202-488-8787, 202-341-4171, E-Mail: arubin@cair.com

453 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Tel: (202) 488-8787

Fax: (202) 488-0833

www.cair.com

