

# **POLICE IN OREGON WON'T HELP FBI QUESTION IMMIGRANTS; IT BREAKS LAW TO QUESTION MIDDLE EASTERN MEN ARBITRARILY, CHIEF SAYS**

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## **Body**

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Portland **police** are refusing to **help** the **FBI question Middle Eastern immigrants** hauled in as part of the terror investigation. They **said** the practice violates **Oregon law**.

The Justice Department asked local **law** enforcement agencies around the country for **help** tracking down 5,000 **men** for **questioning** about the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. But acting **Police Chief** Andrew Kirkland refused.

"The **law** does not allow us to go out and **arbitrarily** interview people whose only offense is immigration or citizenship," he **said** Tuesday.

U.S. Attorney Michael Mosman, the **chief** federal prosecutor in **Oregon**, **said** the **questioning** is legal, but added: "I'm supportive of their right to decide not to do this particular task."

The **FBI** declined to comment.

Mayor Vera Katz on Wednesday **said** the city objected to certain **questions** that would be asked of those on the list. She did not offer details but **said police** may reconsider if the **questions** are changed.

Civil rights activists applauded the city's decision.

"These young **men** of **Middle Eastern** descent are being rounded up for **questioning** without any basis or suspicion or probable cause. So basically it comes down to racial profiling. It isn't OK with African-Americans so it shouldn't be OK for any other racial group or ethnic group," **said** Zaha Hassan of the **Middle** East subcommittee of the National Lawyers Guild.

Mosman **said** the list of 5,000 was drawn up to gather information and denied it was akin to profiling. "It's just because we know less than we need to know about terrorism, and this is a way to learn more," he **said**.

In San Francisco, **police** spokesman Jim Deignan **said** the **FBI** had made no formal request for **help** from the city, but "we'll cooperate with the federal authorities."

In Minneapolis, **police** spokeswoman Cyndi Montgomery **said** the **police chief** would look closely at any request to **help** with interviews.

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"The department hasn't made a decision as to whether such interviews might conflict with racial profiling policies," she **said**.

## Notes

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AMERICA RESPONDS

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