

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and all of God's prophets.



Council on American-Islamic Relations
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June 27, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

RE: Urging DOJ to Reject Unconstitutional and Discriminatory Denaturalization Request Targeting Zohran Mamdani

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), our nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, I write to urge the Justice Department to swiftly and publicly reject Representative Andy Ogles' baseless demand that the federal government pursue denaturalization proceedings against elected official Zohran Mamdani, a naturalized American citizen.

Representative Ogles' June 26th letter, which was accompanied by a vile, racist, and anti-Muslim public statement referring to Mr. Mamdani as "little muhammad," cites irrelevant and dishonest references to the elected official's political speech as a potential basis for a federal witch hunt.

Any action by the Department of Justice based on Mr. Mamdani's political speech or religious and ethnic background would violate the First and Fifth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court has long held that American citizenship cannot be stripped for political beliefs, speech, or protected associations. Denaturalization is an extraordinary and rare legal measure reserved for cases involving clear and material fraud in the naturalization process, not constitutionally protected speech or political dissent.

Moreover, Rep. Ogles' ludicrous request references to Mr. Mamdani's criticism of the notoriously flawed Holy Land Foundation (HLF) trial as a basis for questioning his eligibility for citizenship. The HLF trial has been widely criticized by civil rights advocates and legal experts for its procedural errors, reliance on anonymous witnesses, and the use of guilt-by-association tactics that undermined due process.

The first trial ended in a mistrial after jurors failed to reach unanimous verdicts on most counts, reflecting deep concerns over the government's case, while the second trial ended in partial convictions after the government flouted due process.

Charity and Security Network, the American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights organizations have raised concerns over the trial's reliance on "witnesses testifying under a pseudonym" and the introduction of "prejudicial evidence" that should never have been allowed in a fair trial.¹ Several jurors from the second trial have also publicly expressed doubts about its fairness.

In addition, the Bush administration's anti-Muslim conduct during the Holy Land Foundation prosecution drew widespread criticism^{2,3} after it publicly and dishonestly named dozens of respected American Muslim organizations as "unindicted co-conspirators" without any basis and without affording them any opportunity to respond or defend themselves. In a 2009 order, a federal judge in the Northern District of Texas acknowledged that the government's actions had caused significant reputational harm and raised serious Fifth Amendment due process concerns. (*United States v. Holy Land Foundation*, No. 3:04-CR-240-P, Order, July 1, 2009).

Mr. Mamdani's decision to question the fairness and legitimacy of the Holy Land Foundation case is a position shared by many respected legal scholars and civil rights organizations to this day. Criticizing this case and calling for the release of those wrongfully convicted is lawful political expression, as Rep. Ogles almost certainly knows.

The anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric surrounding this request further underscores the nefarious motivations behind it. Again, Representative Ogles' recent public social media post referring to Mr. Mamdani as "little muhammad" and calling for his deportation reflects an alarming bias that has no place in legitimate law enforcement decision-making.

This attack isn't just Islamophobic; it's a dangerous call to strip a U.S. citizen of his rights because of his name, faith, and politics. That's not an act of patriotism; it's a call for bigoted fascism cloaked in the language of law and order. Such rhetoric fuels religious discrimination and undermines public trust in the impartiality of federal law enforcement.

¹ Alan R. Kabat, Bernabei & Wachtel, PLLC, "Summary: The Fifth Circuit's Holy Land Foundation Decision," Charity and Security Network, December 20, 2011. Website:

https://charityandsecurity.org/litigation/Summary_Fifth_Circuit_HLF_Decision

² ACLU, "Group Asks Court To Clear Names Of Two Organizations Unconstitutionally Labeled 'Unindicted Co-Conspirators'," June 18, 2008, Website: <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-challenges-governments-stigmatizing-mainstream-muslim-groups-holy-land-case>

³ Charity and Security Network, "Publication of Unindicted Co-conspirator List in Holy Land Case Violated Due Process Rights, Court Rules," April 23, 2011, Website:

https://charityandsecurity.org/litigation/summary_litigation_UnCoList_HLF

We respectfully urge the Department of Justice to swiftly and publicly reject Rep. Ogles' baseless request. Doing so would reaffirm the Department's commitment to the constitutional rights of all Americans, regardless of faith, ethnicity, or political belief.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert S. McCaw
Director, Government Affairs Department
Council on American-Islamic Relations