

## IMAN NETWORK

Statewide Muslim Crisis Working Group

Email: [info@imanaction.org](mailto:info@imanaction.org)

Website: [imanaction.org](http://imanaction.org)



### Mosque & Member Organizations

#### Statewide Organizations:

- American Muslim Educator Network
- CAIR Maryland
- ICNA Council for Social Justice
- ICNA Relief
- Islamic Leadership Institute of America
- Justice For All
- Muslim American Society MD/Noor Ctr.
- Muslim Voices Coalition
- United Maryland Muslim Council

#### Anne Arundel County:

- Islamic Society of Annapolis

#### Baltimore City:

- BAM Baltimore Area Muslims
- Beats Rhymes & Relief

#### Baltimore County:

- Islamic Center of Owings Mills
- Islamic Society of Baltimore
- Masjid Fatima

#### Frederick County:

- Frederick County Muslim Council
- Islamic Society of Frederick

#### Harford County:

- Harford Islamic Center
- Masjid Al Falaah

#### Howard County:

- Dar Al Taqwa
- Howard County Muslim Council

#### Montgomery County:

- IMAAM Center
- Islamic Center of Maryland
- Islamic Society of Washington Area
- Montgomery Co. Muslim Council

#### Prince Georges' County:

- Dar Us Salaam
- Diyanet Center of America
- Prince Georges' Co. Muslim Council



February 20, 2024

Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger  
House Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, MD 21401

### Re: Testimony OPPOSING House Bill 0763 - Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention - Membership - Alterations

Dear Chair Clippinger, Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Islamic Maryland Action Network (IMAN) submits this testimony in strong **opposition** to HB0763 calling for the removal of the Council on American-Islamic Relations - Maryland Representation from the Maryland Attorney General's Hate Crimes Commission, to be replaced with the appointment of two Muslim commissioners selected by the Attorney General.

The Islamic Maryland Action Network (IMAN Network) is a statewide Muslim crisis response working group that serves and represents over 350,000 Muslim residents in the state.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. It's Maryland office is the predominant organization for the Muslim community in the state that tracks and reports on hate bias incidents targeting Muslim communities. CAIR is a member of the IMAN Network.

CAIR's Maryland director Dr. Zainab Chaudry is a well respected civil rights activist and leader of the Maryland Muslim community. She has been serving in the advocacy space for a decade. She is the first Muslim to serve on the Maryland State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and has been recognized at the federal, state and local levels of the government for her interfaith work and activism.

Over the past four months, anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Palestinian racism (directed towards both Christians and Muslims) have surged in our state. This has led to an unprecedented rise in harassment, discrimination and hate bias incidents, as well as a relentless campaign to censor and erase Americans who expose injustices and express support for Palestinian human rights.

The unwarranted, misleading and hateful attacks and death threats launched against Zainab over the last four months, including this legislative attempt to remove her and CAIR from the Hate Crimes Commission, is merely an example of that broad-based campaign of hate.

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House bill 0763, introduced by Delegate Dayla Attar and co-sponsored by two of her colleagues of the Maryland General Assembly, is an attempt to validate a dishonest smear campaign against Zainab by emboldening voices that seek to suppress advocacy for Palestinian human rights.

As a representative for Maryland's Muslim community on the Attorney General's Hate Crimes Commission, Zainab and CAIR's voice is critical in articulating our community's experiences and concerns and advancing our interests in a manner that inspires trust. Removing their role is harmful and unjustified. **We strongly oppose this attempt to disempower and marginalize our communities.** Particularly in this political environment, it is perceived as a direct attack on our communities. In order to maintain faith in this commission's mission and objectives, we reserve the right to decide who serves on our behalf in this capacity.

Like Zainab, many residents of Maryland's diverse communities have been vocal and critical of the Israeli government's horrific crimes against Palestinian Christians and Muslims. CAIR, Jewish Voice for Peace DC Metro and the Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace recently held a legislative briefing for the Maryland General Assembly on the staggering humanitarian crisis that has unfolded in Gaza.

As you know, the Israeli government has bombed residential buildings, refugee camps, hospitals, ambulances, mosques and churches, killing over 30,000 people, most of them women and children. Many of our community members have loved ones - in some cases, entire blood lines - who have been unjustly killed in Gaza in the recent violence. Both the United Nations' International Court of Justice and a U.S. Federal Court have declared a plausible case of genocide against the Israeli government.

Israeli leaders have also made genocidal remarks about the Palestinian people, calling them 'human animals,' claiming that there are 'no innocent civilians' in Gaza, and threatening to ethnically cleanse millions of people. At a recent hearing in Howard County, at least 16 reports of hate bias incidents committed by anti-Palestinian demonstrators against members of our community were made to CAIR and the Howard County Police Department.

Attempting to legislatively remove Zainab and CAIR from this Commission because they've joined Muslim, Jewish, Christian allies, including faith leaders and other people of conscience, in criticizing the Israeli government's crimes and for expressing solidarity for human rights for all including Palestinians is unacceptable. This attack on them is an attack on all of us.

As Zainab has said, "There is no conflict between condemning any government's war crimes and standing up against all forms of hate here at home, including Islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism."

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We agree. Our communities stand united against attempts to divide us. We reserve the right to identify our own representatives who advocate for our interests. We reject this attempt to further undermine our communities and undercut our voices. We respectfully call on the House Judiciary Committee to give this bill an unfavorable report.

IMAN Network urges House Judiciary Committee Chair Luke Clippinger, Vice-Chair Sandy Bartlett and Committee members to unequivocally reject any attempt to remove CAIR or Dr. Zainab Chaudry from the OAG Hate Crimes Commission.

Regards,

IMAN Network Steering Committee