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WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0763 WITH AMENDMENTS

On or about August 3, 2023, Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown appointed several members of organizations to the Maryland Commission on Hate Crime Response and Prevention. He is the Chair of this Commission. The Commission was established due to Maryland House Bill 1066, which was signed into law by Governor Moore in June 2023.

Maryland House Bill 1066 requires that the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) be a permanent member of the Commission, among other organizations.

Attorney General Brown appointed Zainab Chaudry, the Executive Director of the Maryland chapter of CAIR, to represent CAIR on this Commission.

CAIR has an extensively documented history of having significant ties to terrorism and antisemites, predating the current 2023-2024 Israel-Hamas war by three decades. A George Washington University Report and a Report from the Investigative Project on Terrorism, which are attached and included herein, detail CAIR's extremism in depth. It is very unfortunate that the Legislature selected CAIR to be on the Commission in the first place given CAIR's background.

CAIR ORIGINS

CAIR originated from the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP).ⁱ The IAP operated as a propagandist for a Hamas-supporting network known as the "Palestine Committee."ⁱⁱ The Muslim Brotherhood established the Palestine Committee to aid Hamas politically and financially in the United States.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, in August 2002, a Federal Judge determined that "the Islamic Association for Palestine ("IAP") has acted in support of Hamas."^{iv} CAIR's founders, Omar Ahmad and Nihad Awad (CAIR's current National Executive Director) were members of the IAP. Both of CAIR's founders attended a meeting at a Philadelphia hotel that the FBI monitored. At that meeting, speakers strategized on how U.S. organizations could support Hamas, with one speaker stating, "people who are directly connected with Jihad should get more assistance."^v When CAIR was incorporated in 1994, it joined the IAP on the Palestine Committee. In 1994, the same year of CAIR's founding, Nihad Awad stated, "I am in support of the Hamas movement."^{vi}

Many CAIR officials have either been linked to terrorism or later indicted on terrorism-related charges.^{vii} Ghassan Alashi, a Board of Director of the Texas branch of CAIR, was sentenced to 65 years in prison in 2009 for providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.^{viii} Ismail Royer, a communications specialist for CAIR, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2004 for conspiracy to assist Al-Qaeda in its battle against U.S. troops in Afghanistan.^{ix} Bassem Khafagi, CAIR's former community affairs director, pleaded guilty to 3 federal counts of bank and visa fraud and agreed to be deported to Egypt in 2003 after he published certain materials that called for suicide bombings against the U.S.^x Rabih Haddad, a

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CAIR fundraiser from Michigan, was deported, around 2002, after it was determined that he financed Al-Qaeda through the Global Relief Foundation. Muthana Al-Hanooti, a CAIR director, was sentenced in 2011 to a year in federal prison for breaching U.S. sanctions against Iraq.^{xi} CAIR was named as an associate of the Muslim Brotherhood and an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation Relief and Development (HLF) trial, which resulted in convictions of HLF officials for transferring 12 million dollars to Hamas.^{xii} The District Court Judge stated that there was “ample evidence to establish the associations of CAIR with Hamas.”^{xiii} In response to the verdict, CAIR issued a 2008 news release defending HLF despite the convictions.^{xiv} In 2014, CAIR honored Sami Al-Arian even though he served on the Palestinian Islamic Jihad governing board.^{xv} That same year, the United Arab Emirates declared that CAIR was a terrorist organization.^{xvi}

OCTOBER 7, 2023

CAIR’s support for Hamas can be seen on full display, most recently in its response to the events that occurred on October 7, 2023.

Since October 7, 2023, Maryland CAIR’s Zainab Chaudry has been writing alarming and antisemitic posts on her Facebook page, including labeling Israelis as Nazis, denying that Hamas murdered Jewish babies, and classifying Hamas' massacre on October 7 as "resistance." Her frequent maligning of Israel and the Jewish people can be viewed on her Facebook page.

Although Chaudry has been outspoken in disseminating her pro-terror and vitriolic rhetoric against Israel and the Jewish people, she is merely following the playbook of CAIR National. A review of the statements of different Executive Directors from various CAIR chapters across the country, including the National Executive Director Nihad Awad, reveals that they all use the same hateful rhetoric, including the glorification of terrorism, on their social media pages. Attached, and included herein, is a compilation of these horrendous posts ("CAIR's Response to October 7, 2023").

CAIR’S REPEATED USE OF ANTISEMITIC TROPES

CAIR’s antisemitic rhetoric, well before October 7, 2023, includes but are not limited to the following themes: (1) Accusing Jewish organizations, such as AIPAC, of controlling government institutions or using money to buy out politicians in exchange for supporting Israel, (2) Spreading conspiracy theories or presenting falsified claims about Israel, (3) Denying the Jewish people their right to exist in the State of Israel and explicitly calling for the dismantling of the Jewish state, (4) Denigrating a whole class of Jews as well as using imagery and symbols which have historically been deemed antisemitic, and (5) Comparing Israel to Nazis.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center in 2021 named CAIR as one of the ten most antisemitic entities in the world, joining Iran and Hamas on that list, and for good reason (“Global Antisemitism 2021 Top Ten”).

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Here is a summary of CAIR's despicable antisemitic rhetoric over the years:

1. In 2021, at the American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) conference, Nihad Awad even called Israel's pre-1967 borders "occupied," stating, "we have to fight. We have to take the fight to the other side. Moving the U.S. embassy, our embassy, from Tel Aviv, which is occupied, to a city that's supposed to be protected under international law, to move that embassy, we should not accept that as a de facto." He went further, "we have to pressure the administration to take our embassy back to Tel Aviv. And *inshallah* [God willing], it will be free later."^{xvii}
2. At the same AMP conference in 2021, CAIR's San Francisco Executive Director, Zahra Billoo, urged the American Muslim community to distance themselves from "polite Zionists." She stated, "we need to pay attention to the Anti-Defamation League. We need to pay attention to the Jewish Federation, the Zionist Synagogues, Hillel chapters on our campuses."^{xviii}
3. At a 2018 AMP event, Billoo reiterated that she is "not going to legitimize a country, [Israel], that I do not believe has a right to exist."^{xix}
4. Billoo and other CAIR officials regularly cite the phrase "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," which if occurred, Israel would be wiped off the map.
5. In 2019, CAIR's Chicago Executive Director, Ahmed Rehab, stated, "F***** Zionism. And F***** you too, France,"^{xx} in response to France's decision to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, as has the United States.
6. In response to Governor Ducey's tweet in 2021, "Arizona stands with Israel," Rehab responded, "Governor Doug Ducey stands with powerful AIPAC lobbyists in fear of losing reelection financing."^{xxi}
7. CAIR's Michigan Executive Director, Dawud Walid, delivered a speech in 2012 in which he stated, "Who are those who incurred the wrath of Allah?" He answered his question, "*hum al-yahud, hum al-yahud* [they are the Jews, they are the Jews]."^{xxii}
8. CAIR's Washington Executive Director, Imraan Siddiqi, stated in 2020, "AIPAC's cool with Nazis and Nazi-adjacents-just as long as they don't support Palestinian rights."^{xxiii}
9. CAIR's Los Angeles Executive Director, Hussam Ayloush, in 2014 called supporters of Israel "Nazis," when he stated, "interesting how supporters of Israel use exact same excuses that Nazis used to justify their murders at the Warsaw Ghetto."^{xxiv}

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10. On November 4, 2023, Ayloush posted on his Facebook page, "Couldn't the Zionists have chosen an empty land to establish their supremacist project outside of Palestine?"
11. Zainab Chaudry (MD-CAIR) posted on her Facebook page on or about December 26, 2023: "Zionist arrogance and entitlement has nothing to do with God and everything to do with self-interest."
12. Abdullah Jaber, Florida's CAIR Executive Director, posted a video on his Facebook page on or about December 5, 2023, where he argued that Jews who back Israel are not the chosen people. "If someone out there believes that committing a genocide is okay and that makes you chosen of God, then I am sorry. Definitely you don't know God, or there is no God to you."

CAIR also often sponsors rallies where attendees display banners or signs with antisemitic phrases, and CAIR never disavows those atrocious slogans. At a May 11, 2021 protest rally in Los Angeles, attendees bellowed: "Long live Palestine, death, death to Israel" and another chant in Arabic, was translated into English as, "with our blood and our souls, we would sacrifice for Palestine."^{xxv}

All of the Maryland Delegates and Senators have received a grassroots Petition from the community at large, which as of the above captioned date, has **10,500+** signatures. The Petition has two specific requests: 1) The removal of *both* Chaudry and CAIR from the hate crime Commission and for 2) the Legislature to provide the Attorney General with the authority to remove a Commission member who violates the Commission's code of conduct. **As evident by the large number of signatures, it is clear that people are repulsed by CAIR and are outraged by their membership on the hate crime commission.** There is no justification whatsoever for CAIR to be on the Maryland hate crime commission, when it actively participates in the dissemination of vile bigotry against the Jewish people and the Jewish state of Israel as well as supporting Hamas.

The Petition reads in part: "*We call upon the Attorney General, the Governor, and elected officials in Annapolis to condemn CAIR and Zainab Chaudry's antisemitism and support of terrorism. We call upon the Legislature to amend the law to remove CAIR from the Commission and allow for Commissioners, such as Zainab Chaudry, to be removed when they violate the code of conduct.*"

HB0763 does remove the Maryland Representative of CAIR, Zainab Chaudry, which is undoubtedly a good start. However, in light of CAIR National's disturbing positions and documented support for terrorism, as stated above, HB0763 needs to expressly state that no CAIR representatives in Maryland or elsewhere should ever be permitted to serve on the Maryland hate crime Commission. The Attorney General could appoint other individuals from CAIR, potentially outside of Maryland, which would not resolve the issue at hand.

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Specifically, removing Zainab Chaudry and CAIR is also necessary because many community members have zero confidence in the Attorney General's ability to exercise any discretionary power to remove Chaudry, even if he could do so. After Chaudry's measly two -week suspension, the Attorney General drafted guidelines for the appointees to the hate crime commission, which include avoiding and discouraging divisive conduct and not directing "personal attacks toward any individual or community." Unfortunately, Attorney General Brown is unwilling to penalize Chaudry for violating the draft guidelines. He also has refused to condemn Chaudry's antisemitism.

If the Legislature is concerned that HB0763 would alienate the Muslim community, it should be stated herein that absolutely the Muslim community should have representation on this Commission. Many moderate Muslim organizations could replace CAIR on this Commission. The Legislature should locate those organizations, with input from others, and HB0763 should specifically cite these appropriate organizations in the statute. If HB0763 is adopted, the only statement that the Legislature will make by removing CAIR is that organizations that endorse terrorism will not have a seat on any Maryland government panel.

Unfortunately, HB0763 does not include any language for removing a Commission member who violates the Commission's code of conduct. It would be practical if the language in HB0748 for removing a Commission member is added to HB0763.

Finally, it is absurd that HB0763 takes effect in October 2024. CAIR and Chaudry would then be able to continue spewing their hatred for Israel and the Jewish people until October 2024 before any action can be taken against them. HB0763 should take effect as soon as the Governor signs it into law.

For the reasons above, I wholeheartedly support HB0763 with certain amendments. All CAIR representatives should be removed from the Commission, and specific moderate Muslim organizations should be named to replace CAIR, a process spelled out in HB0763 for removing a commission member who does not abide by the commission's code of conduct and an implementation date as soon as the Governor signs HB0763 into law.

Respectfully Submitted,



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THE ENDOTES BELOW WERE OBTAINED FROM THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM REPORT, TITLED “CAIR’S ANTISEMITISM UNMASKED,” DATED JUNE 2023.(EXCEPT FOR ENDNOTES VIII-XI WHICH ARE FROM FLORIDA’S 2024 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL).

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- ⁱ “U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et.al., 04-CR-240-G, Pamphlet containing an internal memo of the IAP October 1992,” Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search-5 (Earlier Government Exhibit 003-0005), (N.D. Tex., October 10, 2008).”
- ⁱⁱ “U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et.al., 04-CR-240-G, Palestine Committee Report, Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search-13 (Earlier Government Exhibit 003-0005), (N.D. Tex., October 1, 2008).”
- ⁱⁱⁱ “U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et.al., 04-CR-240-G, Pamphlet containing an internal memo of the IAP October 1992, Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search-5 (Earlier Government Exhibit 003-0005), (N.D. Tex., October 10, 2008).”
- ^{iv} “Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development v. Ashcroft, Memorandum Opinion, 02-CV-442 (D.D.C. August 8, 2002).”
- ^v “FBI analysis of the Philadelphia Conference, Submitted as an exhibit in Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development v. Ashcroft, 02-442 GK, Exhibit 28 at 1445 (D.D.C. August 2002), p.58.”
- ^{vi} “CAIR’s Awad: In support of the Hamas Movement,” Barry University, March 22, 1994.”
- ^{vii} See the Investigative Project On Terrorism’s document titled “The Suspect Ties of CAIR officials, Fundraisers & Trainers.”
- ^{viii} See Florida’s HR Bill 1209 (2024).
- ^{ix} See Florida’s HR Bill 1209 (2024).
- ^x See Florida’s HR Bill 1209 (2024).
- ^{xi} See Florida’s HR Bill 1209 (2024).
- ^{xii} “U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development , et.al., 04-CR-240, Attachment A: List of Unindicted Co-conspirators and/or Joint Ventures,” p.5, (N.D. Tex. May 29, 2007).”
- ^{xiii} “U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et.al., 04-CR-240, Memorandum Opinion Order, p.15, (N.D. Tex., July 1, 2009).”
- ^{xiv} “CAIR says HLF Verdict Based on Fear Mongering, CAIR Press Release, November 26, 2008.”
- ^{xv} “Steven Emerson, CAIR’s Exposed Series Exposes CAIR’s Terrorist Sympathies,” IPT News, September 9, 2020.”
- ^{xvi} “UAE Cabinet approves list of designated terrorist organizations, groups, WAM Emirates News Agency, November 15, 2014.”
- ^{xvii} “AMP 2021 LIVE, November 27, 2021, <https://youtu.be/vfAvJ2ST6UI?t=2854>.”
- ^{xviii} “AMP 2021 LIVE, November 27, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q6oroJXkMs>.”
- ^{xix} “Thank you Zahra Billoo, IPT News, December 10, 2018.”
- ^{xx} “Ahmed Rehab, Facebook, December 4, 2019.”
- ^{xxi} “Ahmed Rehab, Facebook, May 15, 2021.”
- ^{xxii} “Importance of Al-Quds in Islam, Published by Dawud Walid on May 25, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LgNxXnAAZA&t=1636>.”
- ^{xxiii} “Imraan Siddiqi Twitter, February 25, 2020.”
- ^{xxiv} “Husaam Ayloush, Twitter, August 2, 2014.”
- ^{xxv} “Emergency Protest All out for Palestine,” Israeli Consulate-LA, May 11, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/barakatamani/videos/10158576603378778>.”