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CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS


No relevant hearings this week.

ABOUT D.C. NEWS & VIEWS

D.C. News & Views is MPAC's weekly round-up of news from our nation's capitol, plus thoughtful analysis about current issues that affect Muslim Americans.

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Ban on 'Material Support' Contradicts Efforts to Promote National Security

 On Tuesday, the Supreme Court ruled six to three to uphold the ban on 'material support' in the form of training, advice, and/or services to foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). The broad-brushed ruling continues to impede the work of human rights and humanitarian organizations aiming to promote nonviolent means of advocacy. The ruling not only dismisses the fundamental rights that protect the work of such organizations vis-a-vis granted under the U.S. Constitution, but it also erodes the institutions of diplomacy and conflict resolution that are alternate measures to military force.

One of the main plaintiffs in this suit, the Humanitarian Law Project (HLP), insisted that providing educational resources and tools to push militant groups toward peaceful means of advocacy could not be deemed criminal under the U.S. Constitution. In addition, numerous members of civil society have deemed this a violation of their First Amendment rights.

Stephen Vladeck, Professor of Law at American University, stated, "The decision sends a clear message that the First Amendment does not protect even the most benign forms of advocacy on behalf of groups designated as 'foreign terrorist organizations' by the Secretary of State."

According to Chief Justice John Roberts, providing "even seemingly benign support bolsters the terrorist activities of that (FTO) organization." Thus, efforts to push FTOs away from violence into peaceful advocacy ultimately undermines any American administration's goal to foster global security without the constant exertion of our military.

Rather than minimizing terrorism, this ruling will only serve to

debates which shape our country.

escalate it further. Not only does it put up new barriers to communication and education, which can de-escalate global political tensions, it effectively shuts off pathways toward peaceful alternatives to violence.

This leaves only military force as the only conceivable option left for governments and militant groups alike. As a result, more time, lives, money and resources will be spent in order to defeat violent groups. Ultimately, this harms America's national security.

Charities, communities, and Congress need to come together to offer a legislative fix. Not only does the ruling threaten fundamental constitutional rights, it only serves to undermine the safety and security of our nation.

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