



## THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM

### BASIM ELAKARRA



#### ***Biography***

Basim Elkarra is the Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Sacramento Valley, one of the four CAIR California chapters. The CAIR California website lauds Elkarra as “instrumental in building coalitions with Ethnic, Interfaith communities, and law enforcement.”<sup>1</sup> Elkarra was elected as a delegate to the California Democratic Party (CDP) Convention in 2012. At the convention Elkarra was elected to CDP’s Executive Board and Chair of CDP’s Arab American Caucus.<sup>2</sup>

Elkarra currently serves on the Mayor Kevin Johnson’s Transition Team, American Civil Liberties Union-Sacramento Chapter Board, Sacramento Police Advisory Committee, Sacramento Public Library Multicultural Council, Sacramento State University Community Council, Natomas Unified School District Multicultural Advisory Committee, and the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association’s (APAPA) Outreach Committee. Elkarra also served on the Sacramento Police Chief Selection committee and the City and County of San Francisco Human Rights Commission, Youth and Education Committee.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Anti-Law Enforcement Statements***

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<sup>1</sup> Basim Elkarra, Executive Director, “About Us,” CAIR Sacramento Valley Website, <http://ca.cair.com/sacval/about/>

<sup>2</sup> Basim Elkarra, Executive Director, “About Us,” CAIR Sacramento Valley Website, <http://ca.cair.com/sacval/about/>

<sup>3</sup> Basim Elkarra, Executive Director, “About Us,” CAIR Sacramento Valley Website, <http://ca.cair.com/sacval/about/>

- "Law enforcement authorities have every right to follow up on legitimate leads in a criminal investigation, but to target an entire community and conduct a 'round up the usual suspects' approach will only serve to intimidate those whose cooperation is sought," Elkarra said regarding the detention of Muslims in Lodi, CA in 2005.<sup>4</sup>
- "There have been threats of deportation, telling someone they can't have an attorney, when the attorney was on the phone they wouldn't speak to the attorney," Elkarra added.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2005 Elkarra also claimed to have a list of eight incidents where he alleged the rights of Lodi Muslims may have been violated by the FBI.<sup>6</sup>
- Recounting a conference call with Sen. Barbara Boxer in 2007 Elkarra stated: "So we had a conference call with Senator Boxer on Monday, and so she brought up some of the concerns - and these were the exact same concerns that these right-wing bloggers have against us; the same things. And we told her, 'You're paying attention to these folks?' (they said) 'Well former FBI officials said this about you guys.' I said, 'Yeah exactly, former FBI officials.' Pomerantz, that's his name, who actually works with Emerson, who gets paid, we have to remind, he gets paid to do this, to attack us."<sup>7</sup>
- "Everyone is watching us. You know I got off the airplane today, just got off the phone with the FBI, and I find the officer recording what was going on...So people are watching us. And when she found out I was Muslim they asked so many questions. You know, our example, when you're a college student your peers are watching you; your friends that you're growing up with are watching you. Especially after 9/11, all eyes are on Muslims. You know what's sad is unfortunately we have a lot of Muslims that set a bad example. Because [they say] 'I know a Muslim and he does this and he does that. You're not supposed to do that but I know Muslims that do that.' All eyes are on Muslims nowadays."<sup>8</sup>
- "Law enforcement authorities have every right to follow up on legitimate leads in a criminal investigation, but to target an entire community and conduct a 'round

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<sup>4</sup> CAIR-CA: FOIA Request Filed Over Lodi 'Harassment', by CAIR, Friday Jun 17th, 2005 9:48 AM, <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2005/06/17/17479371.php> (accessed November 1, 2012).

In 2005 the FBI conducted an investigation of Muslims in Lodi, California. The investigation led to the arrest of 5 Muslims. They were charged with making false statements to federal officials and three were charged with immigration violations. However, CAIR claimed that it received multiple reports of intimidating tactics used by FBI agents.

<sup>5</sup> Layla Bohm. "Some not happy with how the FBI handling inquiry," *Lodi News-Sentinel*, Jun 15, 2005

<sup>6</sup> Layla Bohm. "Some not happy with how the FBI handling inquiry," *Lodi News-Sentinel*, Jun 15, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Zone Conference, Cal Poly Pomona, January 12-14, 2007

<sup>8</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Zone Conference, Cal Poly Pomona, January 12-14, 2007

up the usual suspects' approach will only serve to intimidate those whose cooperation is sought."<sup>9</sup>

### ***Anti-American Statements***

- “This is so many people out there in America, so many people in America hate you, and a lot with a passion you cannot even imagine.”<sup>10</sup>
- “And this double standard where you prosecute certain people [in the US] if they speak out against, for example, if they’re anti-Semitic or they speak about the Holocaust you put them in jail; you prosecute them in Europe. At the same time they are attacking our faith. So why this double standard? So we need to address that...”<sup>11</sup>

### ***Anti-Israel Statements***

- “And there’s people out there that want to marginalize our community; they’re afraid of the power of our community. Yes because of the Palestinian issue, there’s no denying it. It’s all a litmus test. It’s a litmus test about Israel. If you criticize Israel you’re not O.K, but if you don’t criticize Israel you’re O.K. That’s what it’s about; there’s no denying it. This is about Israel, and this why they’re attack us. And someone mentioned to me that actually the Israeli military had an intelligence report that stated the biggest threat to Israel was the American Muslim community. (Takbir!) (Crowd: Allah hu akbar) “And they see CAIR as the front line of that, and so that’s why they’re going to attack us and they’re always going to attack us.”<sup>12</sup>

### ***Barbara Boxer’s Award***

In December 2006, Senator Boxer rescinded an award issued to Basim Elkarra. Boxer said she was unaware the award had been issued and that her staff had failed to investigate CAIR’s background sufficiently. “To praise an organization because they haven’t been indicted is like somebody saying, ‘I’m not a crook,’” Boxer says. “I’m going to take a lot of hits for this. But I’m just doing what I think is right.”<sup>13</sup>

Nihad Awad responded to this incident. Awad said, “Ghassan Elashi was a former member of CAIR in Dallas -- he did not do it on CAIR's behalf. This is true guilt by

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<sup>9</sup> “CAIR –CA: FOIA Request Filed over Lodi ‘Harrassment,’” CAIR, June 17, 2005, <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2005/06/17/17479371.php> (accessed September 6, 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Zone Conference, Cal Poly Pomona, January 12-14, 2007

<sup>11</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Conference, Sacramento State University, February 3-5, 2006

<sup>12</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Zone Conference, Cal Poly Pomona, January 12-14, 2007

<sup>13</sup> Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball, “CAIR Play?” *Newsweek*, December 19, 2006.

association. We have tens of thousands of members nationwide, and it will be very unfair to hold the organization responsible for the actions of an individual.”<sup>14</sup>

- “She [Boxer] said sorry, but she was saying sorry for giving me the award in the first place. She wasn’t really apologizing. She didn’t apologize for rescinding the award; she was apologizing for giving it to CAIR in the first place.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Magagnini and David Whitney, “Boxer Pulls Muslim Award, CAIR Director's Honor Rescinded Over Concerns About Group's Activities,” *The Sacramento Bee*, January 4, 2007, <http://www.sacbee.com/101/story/102832.html>

<sup>15</sup> Basim Elkarra, MSA West Zone Conference, Cal Poly Pomona, January 12-14, 2007