

□ NATIONAL NEWS

Muslims Welcome Clinton Guidelines on Workplace Religious Expression

President Clinton's new guidelines on religious expression in the federal workplace has been welcomed by Muslims.

The "Guidelines on Religious Freedom and Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace," the first of their kind, addresses issues of religious expression and accommodation of religious practices, and forbid discrimination such as hiring, firing, promoting or otherwise favoring or disfavoring employees on basis of their religion.

Under the Guidelines, Muslims can be granted time off for Friday congregational and the five daily prayers as long as they do not interfere with work, copies of the Qur'an can be kept in offices, Muslim women have the option to wear the hijab at work, and employees can engage in religious discussion as long as it does not resemble proselytizing or offense.

ISNA Secretary General Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed has welcome the Guidelines and has urged Muslim federal employees to benefit from them within the parameters of the law. He said that ISNA will actively serve to enlighten Muslims about the new rules in order to spread the benefits to a greater number of Muslims.

Abdulrahman Alamoudi, Executive Director of the Washington, DC-based American Muslim Council (AMC) has welcomed the issuance of the Guidelines. He said that the federal government has set a positive example and hopefully other employers, both in the public and private sectors, will follow suit. AMC, however, expressed its dismay that the commander-in-chief did not include the Department of Defense within the purview of these Guidelines.

In a letter addressed to President Clinton, Nihad Awad, Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), another capital based Muslim advocacy organization, said that the Guidelines "address many of the challenges faced by American Muslim workers in the government and in private corporations, which may now adopt similar policies." Awad said that American Muslims share the hope that this country will become a multi-racial, multi-religious society in which "differences are a cause of celebration, not a source of conflict."

The guidelines which are binding only on civilian executive branch of the federal agencies have also been welcomed by the National Council of Churches.

Guide for Educators about Islamic Religious Practices

The Washington, DC based Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Research Center is gathering information for use in an Educator's Guide to Islamic Religious practices designed to address the needs of Muslim students in the public school system. This guide will, inshallah, be distributed to teachers, principals and school boards.

CAIR is asking that Muslim parents, students and educators forward any information that may be of use in this project. Useful information could include actual experiences (positive and negative) of Muslims in the public schools, issues that need to be addressed or any other concerns facing Muslim students and parents.

CAIR recently published "An Employer's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices." This booklet is available for \$5 [includes S/H] by calling 202-659-2247.

Another Muslim in American jail held without charge

Mazen Al-Najjar, a 40-year old American educated engineer who taught Arabic part-time in the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa, has been held without trial by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) since May 19.

INS officials allege that the World and

Islamic Studies Enterprise (WISE), a USF think tank that Al-Najjar managed is a fundraising front for Islamic Jihad, an activist organization working for Palestinian rights.

USF President Betty Castor says that the university's internal investigation failed to link either WISE or Al-Najjar with any alleged terrorist activity. Despite such convincing evidence, INS continues to jail Al-Najjar in contradiction to the US Supreme Court ruling that aliens have the same rights of due process that American citizens carry.

Meanwhile in Virginia, Dr. Anwar Haddam, an elected member of the Algerian parliament that was aborted by the secular-fascist military junta, is similarly being held in detention without trial. Dr. Haddam observed a fast of over two months to protest his unexplained imprisonment.

Earlier, Dr. Musa Abu-Marzouk was jailed without trial in New York for - months for alleged ties to organizations seeking Palestinian rights and finally released when he agreed to leave the United States. Dr. Abu Marzouk, an American educated engineer who is married to an American Muslimah is a legal resident of the country.

American Muslims have expressed dismay over such discriminatory and unconstitutional actions of the United States government.

Conference on Muslims & the Information Superhighway Tools for the 21st Century

The information Superhighway is increasingly being used as a tool for Islamic da'wah and for sharing information among Muslims around the world.

In recognition of the increasing importance of this sector, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) is organizing the first Muslims & the Information Superhighway Conference on April 10 - 12 1998. The Conference will bring together Muslim information technology practitioner to share experiences, make connections and share ideas on the potential of the information highway as a tool for promoting the understanding of Islam.

ISNA believes that the potential interaction of these professionals will help create better channels of communications and contribute toward building a strong Islamic community in North America. This Conference will contribute toward opening opportunities for Muslim professionals and users to utilize the power of the Internet.

Interested professionals who would like to participate in this epoch-making event should submit the abstracts of their presentation to the Conference Committee by January 15, 1998. The proposals should be professionally based and show how Muslims, Muslim businesses and Muslim societies and countries could benefit from their ideas and suggestions.

Please send abstracts to:

Muslims & the Information Superhighway Conference
ISNA, P.O. BOX 38, Plainfield, IN 46168 USA