



Press Release Regarding

Dr. Esam Omeish's Resignation From the VA Commission on Immigration

The resignation of Dr. Esam Omeish, President of Muslim American Society (MAS), was submitted earlier today to Virginia Governor Tim Kaine. Dr. Omeish submitted his resignation from the Commission on Immigration, because of the controversy that erupted following allegations and smear campaigns about past activities. Dr. Omeish submitted his resignation to prevent any controversy from distracting the very important work of the commission on immigration and continues to wish them utmost success in addressing this very vital matter for the future of the commonwealth of Virginia. Dr. Omeish, while clearly disappointed and dismayed along with the Muslim community of Virginia, wishes to continue to work with the governor and his staff in any future capacity for the betterment of the Commonwealth.

The smear campaign started with a letter from a delegate from Woodstock, Virginia. Delegate Gilberts alleged that the organization that Dr Omeish heads is a front for terrorism. An allegation far too often quoted by Islamophobes and Muslim bashers to intimidate Muslims from playing a broader and more influential role in mainstream American politics and societal affairs. The smear campaign brings forth comments and speech excerpts of Dr Omeish which were taken out of context and used to undermine a whole community of faith in a relentless campaign of Islamophobia and intimidation to hold Muslim community leaders hostage to the fears and prejudices of the far right and special interests.

The Muslim American Society (MAS), headed by Dr Omeish, is the largest grassroots Muslim organization in the United States with over 55 chapters, 30 regional offices, hundreds of mosques and tens of thousands of members and supporters. Its activities range from community development to youth education to civic engagement and empowerment. The vilification of MAS is unfounded and greatly hampers its constant efforts to positively integrate the new and growing Muslim community which is over 50% immigrant, in the American society and to groom Muslim youth to be exemplary participatory citizens. All these allegations revolve around obsolete historical associations and out of context statements wrapped in hateful misleading insinuations by individuals bent on alienating and intimidating Muslim leaders and activists.

Leading American Muslims are needed more than ever today to spearhead efforts to empower new immigrant Muslims and help integrate them swiftly in mainstream America. They are also immensely needed to continue to uphold the tenets of moderation, religious tolerance and civic participation which are both dear to Islam and America. MAS vows to continue its path of moderation, engagement and outreach to all segments of American society. The ill-fated future of Islamophobes will be overcome by the patient perseverance of American Muslim leaders and their allies of justice and tolerance in the greater American society.



BIO FOR DR ESAM OMEISH

- Born and raised in Tripoli, Libya. Has been in the US since 1982.
- Completed Middle and High Schools with top honors. Earned a ranking of third overall the country in Libya prior to coming and scored a perfect grade point average in High school in America.
- Graduated from Georgetown University with a double major in International Relations and Biology in 1989. Has been inducted into the Dean's list in his first year at Georgetown.
- Completed Medical School at Georgetown University 1993 and completed his surgical training and residency in 1998. Has been in private practice in Northern Virginia since 1998. Currently the division chief of general surgery at Alexandria Hospital and the recipient of the Outstanding Physician Award for year 2007 at the hospital. He has also been elected recently a member of the hospital's medical executive committee.
- Recently appointed by the Governor of Virginia, the honorable Tim Kaine, to the highly visible commission on Immigration as the only Muslim appointee and one of ten chosen state-wide to serve on this commission.
- Currently the national president of Muslim American Society (MAS), the largest Muslim grass-roots organization in the US with over sixty chapters nationwide. He has been the former head of MAS youth division and member of its board of trustees for many years. He also served as former head of the NJ MAS chapter and the DC MAS chapter. He was elected by the highest number of votes of the General Assembly as president of MAS.
- Former National President of the Muslim Student Association of US and Canada.
- Board member of several civic and charitable organizations. A former vice president of Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic center and a current board member.
- A national speaker and representative of the Muslim community in media and governmental affairs with meetings with officials in the White House including President Clinton 1999, Congress, State department, Defense department, Justice department and Homeland security as well as media appearance in numerous radio and TV shows including CNN, MSNBC, Aljazeera, C-span, Washington post, Chicago Tribune, Almujtamaa, and many other media outlets.
- Married to Dr. Badria Kafala, a molecular biologist and a local coordinator for MAS Girl Scouts in the DC area. He has four children, Abrar 12, Anwar 11, Yousof 7 and Ibrahim 2 and they live in Fairfax, Virginia.