

FBI accused of using Islamophobic materials

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Religious leaders from Christian, Jewish and interfaith organizations have called on the White House to convene an interagency task force to investigate and resolve concerns over recent allegations that the federal government has used biased and misleading materials about Islam to train personnel for homeland security.

In a letter to Deputy National Security Adviser John Brennan, the religious leaders cited as examples a consultant who in addressing the Washington FBI field office called Islamic Shari'a law a threat to United States law and an FBI report asserting that wearing traditional Muslim attire or frequently attending a mosque are signs that an individual might be a "homegrown Islamic extremist."

Such training "casts suspicion on an entire religious community whose adherents are merely exercising their First Amendment right to freely exercise their faith," the leaders said.

Signers of the letter included Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty; Welton Gaddy, president of the Interfaith Alliance; Jennifer Butler, executive director of Faith in Public Life; Steven Martin, executive director of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good; and leaders of several mainline Protestant and Jewish groups.

In the meantime, the Council on American-Islamic Relations says 15 of its chapters nationwide have filed 87 separate public-records requests about possible Islamophobic training of local, state and national law enforcement personnel.

The Washington-based CAIR said November 15 it seeks information about state-level trainings that may have used federal taxpayer dollars to fund anti-Muslim trainers.

"We firmly believe that good training leads to good investigations, while biased training leads to biased investigations," a CAIR statement said. —ABP