

Why a Muslim police officer is suing the NYPD

by [Gretel Kauffman](#) in the [March 15, 2017](#) issue

[\(The Christian Science Monitor\)](#) A Muslim NYPD officer has filed a lawsuit against New York City and its police department, alleging that the department turned a blind eye to years of religion-based harassment from her colleagues.

Danielle Alamrani of Brooklyn joined the New York Police Department in 2006 and converted to Islam one year later. The reported bullying began in 2008, when she started wearing a hijab to work. In the years since, her lawsuit claims, Alamrani has been subjected to physical and verbal attacks from her fellow officers, including one incident where two colleagues allegedly attempted to rip the hijab off her head.

“You do expect police officers to have thicker skin and be able to deal with other people,” Alamrani’s attorney, Jesse Rose, told the *Washington Post*. “But you don’t expect them to have to do that with their own colleagues.”

The lawsuit comes just months after the NYPD expanded its policy on religious accommodations, granting Sikh and Muslim officers permission to grow out their beards and wear a turban in place of the traditional police cap. The move was applauded by many as a step toward greater inclusiveness in law enforcement.

But it also comes at a time when many U.S. Muslims report feeling unsafe, following a 67 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslims in 2015 and a reported surge in anti-Muslim crimes and rhetoric linked to the 2016 presidential election.

Alamrani is not the first NYPD officer to report anti-Muslim harassment. In December, a female officer named Aml Elsokary was threatened and referred to as “ISIS” while she was off duty and wearing her hijab. The man responsible was arrested on charges of aggravated harassment and menacing as a hate crime.

“She is an example of everything we would want from our fellow citizens—a commitment to others, a commitment to service, a willingness to do something greater than herself,” New York mayor Bill de Blasio said of Elsokary shortly after the incident. “And what does she get for it? Threats to her life and bigotry. Taunts. We can’t allow this. It’s unacceptable in this city, it’s unacceptable in this nation.”

Such incidents have prompted some Muslim women to leave their hijabs at home out of fear of attracting negative public attention.

“It would be a tragedy to us here in the United States if Muslims felt like they had to hide their faith, if Muslim women felt like they had to take off their hijabs, or Sikh men their turbans, or anyone who felt they could not identify who they are in public,” said Omar Suleiman, president of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research in Irving, Texas. “It’s important that we collectively challenge these attacks on people that are identifiably Muslim. . . . It’s important for us to challenge all of that, and to stand tall and firm, because at the end of the day, bigotry is not something that can be reasoned with. And bigotry should not force us to change the way we live our lives.”

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