

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

March 19, 2001

To: Mr. Omar Ahmad, Chairman of the Board
CC: Mr. Nihad Awad, Executive Director

Subject: Discrimination at CAIR

Dear Mr. Ahmad,

I am writing this letter to file a formal complaint against the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Please also note that I have informed you and the appropriate parties of my decision to resign on Monday March 26, 2001, and that my last day will be Friday March 30, 2001. Since that email was sent to you, Mr. Awad, Mr. Hooper and Mr. Iqbal no one has contacted me regarding this issue except for a brief meeting at 4:00pm EST as requested by Mr. Iqbal. After two years of hard work and dedication I find it appalling and unacceptable.

It should be noted that four hours after receiving my email, Mr. Iqbal called me into his office to "discuss" the issue. He completely denied offering Ms. Serag my position two weeks prior, he accused me of not completing my work while working with Mrs. Qureshi in the Membership Department and continuously rolled his eyes at every comment that I would make. That is not professional or Islamic and I am offended at such behavior.

It should further be noted that both incidents are outlined in my Cited Allegations document that has been included. I would highly encourage that a thorough probe into the actions of Mr. Iqbal should take place, and that Mr. Salaam, Ms. Rahman, Ms. Serag and Mrs. Qureshi all be questioned for authenticity of what Mr. Iqbal is claiming. He has had a tendency to "forget" and "miscommunicate," and CAIR can suffer no more.

I am officially requesting a meeting to be set up with the following individuals. Mr. Awad, Mr. Iqbal, Mr. Salaam, Ms. Rahman, Ms. Serag and I. I will be more than willing to come back for this meeting.

I have been a victim of both, gender and religious discrimination. At first glance, it may appear unusual to claim discrimination while working for a civil rights organization. It may seem even more unusual that I am a Muslim claiming religious discrimination while working for a Muslim organization. I urge you to take the time to read through this complaint to find the explanation for both claims. It is due to the fact that I have struggled for two years, along with others, with frustration and acts of discrimination, that these recent incidents made it clear to me that I am working in a hostile environment here at CAIR.

1. **On or about February 7th, 2001**, I worked with Mr. Iqbal to update the Internship Application Form. He informed me that he wanted to ask which sect of Islam the applicants were from. I told him that he would have to do that section because I did

not feel comfortable putting that on the application. I believe this is where he discovered that my background is Shi'a and from this point his attitude changed towards me.

2. **On February 12, 2001**, Mr. Iqbal called me into his office to inform me that he wanted me to dedicate four hours each day to the membership department to assist Mrs. Qureshi. CAIR has been using Mrs. Qureshi for much of the Website and IT problems that we have had. This has caused Mrs. Qureshi to fall even further behind in her primary workload. Therefore, it was agreed in a staff meeting that CAIR would hire an IT person to take care of our Website and other issues of that nature. I reminded Mr. Iqbal of this and informed him that four hours a day would be detrimental to my own work. He replied by saying that he didn't think I had enough work to do during the day. He stated that the issue was discussed with Mr. Awad, so the decision was final. I later discussed this incident with Mr. Awad. He confirmed that Mr. Iqbal told him that I was one of several employees at CAIR that did not have enough work to do.

Later this same day I met with Mr. Awad to discuss getting a detailed job description. I also mentioned Mr. Iqbal's intentions of ascertaining which sect of Islam an applicant was. He was shocked and said that CAIR has never and will never inquire about such things and that he would clear it up with Mr. Iqbal.

3. **On February 20, 2001**, Mr. Iqbal told me that I was to take the place of Mrs. Robinson as the receptionist while she was trained for the membership department. I was surprised since I was suddenly getting pushed from one position to another. I had helped Mrs. Qureshi in the Membership Department for about a week. I informed Mr. Iqbal that I was dissatisfied with the decision and that four hours of being a receptionist was not in my job description. He replied by saying that it was only for a couple of months until they could find another receptionist.

Later this same day I discovered that Mr. Iqbal did not trust me. Four days prior, I asked for him for clearance to be allowed to attend the Saunders Elementary School symposium that I've attended in the past. It was on this day that he asked another employee if it was indeed true that I had attended this symposium in the past. My honesty has never been questioned at CAIR up until now. I don't know what made Mr. Iqbal feel that he could not believe me.

4. **On February 21, 2001**, I complained to Mr. Awad about my situation. He stated that the final decision for these matters would be up to Mr. Iqbal, but that he would meet with Mr. Iqbal and myself to discuss the controversy. When I informed him about the incident where my honesty was questioned, he was surprised and, once again, said he would clear it up with Mr. Iqbal.
5. **On February 22, 2001**, Mr. Iqbal came into my office to speak to me. He wanted to know what was on my screen and what I was working on. I showed him the Career Services Database that I had been working on since November of 2000. He was

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unaware of this project and had never heard of it before. I was extremely shocked and concerned. I did not understand how he could label me as a person who did not have enough to do during the day if he was not aware of the projects I was working on.

Later that morning at 9:00am, Mr. Iqbal reminded me that I was to answer the phones from 9:00am to 12:00pm. I told him that it was my understanding that Mr. Awad was to meet with the both of us to discuss this issue. Mr. Iqbal stated that he met with Mr. Awad yesterday and my concerns were brought up, but the decision was final.

When Mr. Awad arrived at 10:45am I asked him about the meeting that was supposed to take place between him, Mr. Iqbal and I. Mr. Awad seemed confused so I told him that Mr. Iqbal said that they had met yesterday and the decision was final. Mr. Awad said that there must have been a lack of communication and that he would talk to Mr. Iqbal

At 3:30pm, Mr. Awad requested a meeting in his office with Mr. Iqbal and I. To my surprise, Mr. Awad started the meeting by saying, "I am only here to interfere if there is a personal issue to be discussed. Khalid (Mr. Iqbal) has final authority over this matter." I did not know why, after all of this, Mr. Awad requested a meeting to tell me that he could not do anything. Mr. Awad remained very distant the entire meeting and at times it seemed like he was not listening. I informed them that I was hired as a research assistant and then moved up to the Training and Internship Director. I stated that I had plenty of work to do and I didn't know how they came to the conclusion that I did not without sitting with me and asking what projects I was working on. I told them I would be completely miserable being demoted to answering phones for four hours a day. I even informed them that two other employees were more than willing to split the phone duty with me. This suggested compromise was rejected. At the end of the meeting Mr. Iqbal said he had heard all this before and since his decision was final, there was no use in going back and forth about it. He continued by saying that I didn't have enough to do in the office and that my cell phone was going off too much.

It was at this point that I knew I was being targeted. I believe that Mr. Iqbal retaliated against me as a result of my complaints to Mr. Awad. Not only was it suspicious that out of all the cell phones that go off in the office (Mr. Awad, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Shakir, Ms. Rahman, Ms. Serag, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Qureshi) he only noticed mine, but he did not know that a majority of my phone calls are from interns that call me for information. Not only do I receive calls from interns at work; I receive calls from interns at all hours during the night and on weekends. It is unfortunate that no one took the time to find out when, where, and how I do my job before I was demoted to part-time receptionist.

6. **On March 15, 2001.** While having lunch with another employee, I was informed that two days prior (March 13, 2001) Mr. Iqbal approached this particular employee and wanted to meet. In this meeting, Mr. Iqbal offered this employee the opportunity of heading up the Leadership Training Center. This employee was very shocked and

asked Mr. Iqbal, "Isn't that Tannaz's job?" Mr. Iqbal replied, "Tannaz will not be doing that job. I do not want to give her the position, but I don't mind if she works under you. I don't want her doing it alone." The employee replied, "No... I have no interest in the LTC and plus, I don't want to step on anyones toes." Mr. Iqbal kept on insisting that this employee take the position, while the employee refused.

I would like to make it clear that these recent incidents with Mr. Iqbal were the last straws that broke the camel's back. I have been frustrated with discrimination at CAIR for two years. CAIR has it's own secret history of discrimination before Mr. Iqbal came, that has caused many employees to quit and very few to come back.

I am prepared to file a formal charge of discrimination with the EEOC and to take this matter further. I am not out to get CAIR, nor do i want to make this a public issue to embarrass the Muslims. But CAIR can not continue to overwork and mistreat its employees while telling them not to complain because it's for the sake of Allah (swt).

It saddens me deeply to have to take such steps against CAIR, but alas they have left me with no other options. My job description has completely been taken over. I have no authority in my work. I have been demoted to the position of answering the telephones. My interns are sent to grant writing classes and are given the responsibility of researching and grant writing on behalf of CAIR, while I am not informed of ANY of these things nor have I been asked to participate in such projects. I am completely dishonored and mistreated, and I can not stand for it any longer.

I hope that you will take the time to fully analyze the situation and get back to me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Tannaz Haddadi

The following individuals have witnessed some, if not all, of the aforementioned incidents. After reviewing the information in this complaint, it appears that Tannaz Haddadi may have been discriminated against. We are available to discuss the issue further.

Joshua Salaam
Civil Rights Coordinator

Nancy Hanaan Serag
Office Manager

Isra'a Abdul-Rahman
Executive Assistant