

September 1, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

**RE: Request for DOJ to Investigate “Muslim-Free Zone” Bans by Public Accommodations**

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

We the undersigned civil liberties, human rights, immigrant rights, faith, and cultural organizations call on the Department of Justice to investigate whether so-called “Muslim-Free Zones” by places of public accommodation violate federal civil rights laws, particularly Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title II makes clear that it is unlawful for certain establishments to deny any person, “full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation . . . without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.”

If such an investigation reveals that an entity has engaged in illegal discrimination, we urge the DOJ Civil Rights Division’s Housing and Civil Enforcement Section to bring civil enforcement proceedings against business owners who have violated the law.<sup>[1]</sup>

Since 2014, a number of U.S. gun shops and firing ranges have publicly declared themselves “Muslim-Free Zones” in Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, and New Hampshire. Such declared bans are a clear denial of public accommodation to American Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, based solely on perception of religious beliefs. Several examples of these bans are included in the attachments below. Title II specifically prohibits discrimination by places of entertainment like, in many instances, firing ranges.

Despite numerous reports of public bans of American Muslims by U.S. businesses, including firing ranges, the DOJ has remained silent in its response to this growing trend of denial of a religious minority’s right of equal access to public accommodations.

American businesses posting “Muslim-Free Zone” declarations are no different than the “Whites Only,” “No Dogs, No Jews,” “No Mexican” and “Irish Need Not Apply” signs that were posted during past shameful periods of our nation’s history that we hoped were over.

We look forward to your prompt action in addressing these highly visible displays of public accommodation denials. We also request a meeting with you to further discuss the civil rights impact of these bans and how we can best engage with the DOJ to address current and future discriminatory exclusions by public accommodations.

Sincerely,

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<sup>[1]</sup> DOJ Civil Rights Division, “Combatting Religious Discrimination and Protection Religious Freedom - Religious Discrimination in Public Accommodations,” August 6, 2015, Source: <http://www.justice.gov/crt/combating-religious-discrimination-and-protecting-religious-freedom-1>

## **National Organizations**

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Defending Dissent and Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
Fair Immigration Reform Movement, FIRM  
Islamic Circle of North America  
ICNA Council for Social Justice  
Islamic Society of North America  
Japanese American Citizens League  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslim American Society  
Muslim Legal Fund of America  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Muslim Ummah of North America  
NAACP  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Council of La Raza, NCLR  
National Employment Law Project  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
National Partnership for New Americans  
National People's Action  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
Northern Borders Coalition  
OneAmerica  
Rights Working Group  
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, SALDEF  
Sikh Coalition  
South Asian Americans Leading Together  
UNITED SIKHS  
US Council of Muslim Organizations  
Voices For Freedom  
YWCA USA

## **State Organizations**

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice  
Arkansas United Community Coalition  
CASA  
Causa Oregon  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles  
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition  
Comunidades Unidas / Communities United  
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas  
El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights  
Idaho Community Action Network  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Junta for Progressive Action  
Latin American Coalition  
Maine People's Alliance  
Make the Road NY  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Michigan United  
Montana Organizing Project  
Nebraska Appleseed  
New Hampshire Alliance for Immigrant Rights-MIRA  
Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice  
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition  
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste  
Progressive Leadership Alliance for Nevada  
Promise Arizona  
Rights for All People  
Somos Un Pueblo Unido  
Sunflower Community Action  
The New York Immigration Coalition  
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition  
Texas Organizing Project  
WashingtonCAN!  
Workers Defense Project  
Voces de la Frontera, VOCES

Attachment One



Example of “Muslim Free” sign posted by the gun store Save Yourself Survival and Tactical Gear in Oktaha, Oklahoma.

**Attachment Two**



Example of “Muslim Free” sign posted by the gun store Jace Firearms in Whitesburg, KY.

**Attachment Three**



Facebook post by the hunting and fishing store JJ’s Sporting Goods in Saint Johnsville, New York publicly declaring that the shop would no longer sell to Muslims.