



To: Northglenn, Adams County, state and federal law enforcement authorities
Re: Targeting and harassment of the North Denver Islamic Center & Outreach Director Ihsan Riahi

March 1, 2021

As faith leaders with Together Colorado* we are extremely concerned about the escalating targeting and harassment of the North Denver Islamic Center in Denver & Outreach Director Ihsan Riahi. Mr. Riahi and the Center are active participants in our statewide multi-faith organizing through our Adams & Broomfield County Faith Leaders Caucus and our Statewide Faith Leaders Caucus. Their participation has been an invaluable contribution to our work for human dignity in Colorado.

While the mosque has been dealing with targeting and harassment by Richard Roy Blake for about six years, and local law enforcement has dealt with him on numerous occasions, he has now escalated to extortion and has been tracking down Mr. Riahi specifically. Additionally, these threats have now become known to the members of the mosque, and the community is on edge, worried, and fearful, especially with the escalation of hate crimes and militant extremist views in our country in the last months and years.

Mr. Blake has expressed on multiple occasions his extreme, hateful, xenophobic views about Muslims & Islam and most importantly about their place of worship where they do an open house and invite people of faith and no faith to come and break bread together to spread love and understanding and build bridges. He stands outside the mosque with signs and has openly called their guests, including priests, deacons, and rabbis, all men and women of faith, "Traitors". On several occasions Mr. Blake has brought other people with him who share his extremist views; and once he invited an armed anti-government militia to come and protest at the mosque.

In mid-February, Mr. Blake sent a second letter to the Mosque trying to extort money. He also attempted to contact Mr. Riahi at a previous address and ended up sending him a letter as well.

All of these actions are signs that he is a threat and a person with some mental problems that cannot be trusted nor ignored.

It is understandable that the executive board of the Mosque is taking these developments very seriously, as an imminent threat to the safety of the Mosque and their congregants, Mr. Riahi and others in leadership positions, and to our city and community in general.

We, the undersigned faith leaders of Together Colorado, stand with the North Denver Islamic Center and wholeheartedly support the Mosque's call for intervention by the appropriate law enforcement authorities to address this threat and ensure the wellbeing of not only their leadership, congregants and place of worship, but of all members of the community who are put at risk by the actions and threats of Mr. Blake.

We respectfully await your response to this petition.

Signed by 69 Colorado faith leaders & community leaders

*Together Colorado is a nonpartisan, multi-racial, multi-faith community organization that unlocks the power of people to transform their communities through community organizing. Comprised of 220 congregations, schools, clergy and faith leaders across the state, we are working together to place human dignity at the center of public life in Colorado. We are a member of Faith in Action, the largest grassroots, faith-based organizing network in the United States, working with 1,000 religious congregations in more than 200 cities and towns through 40 local and state federations.

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Together Colorado is a nonpartisan interfaith organization

Note: Congregation/Denomination/Ministry listed
for identification purposes only

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Jefferson Unitarian Church
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Madelyn Birgers
First Unitarian Society
Pueblo

Deacon Linda Bobbit
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Thornton

Susan Bolduc
ELCA-Lutheran
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Reverend Emily Cardin
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Reverend Thandiwe Dale-Ferguson
First Congregational Church
Loveland

Interfaith Specialist Jeanette Deters
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Westminster

Rev. Jyoti DeVernie
Center for Spiritual Living
Grand Junction

Rev. Kelly Dignan
Unitarian Universalist
Denver

Pastor Wesley Dunbar
St. John's Lutheran Church
Thornton

Pastor Emily Easton (retired)
Rocky Mountain United Methodist Church
Pueblo

Rabbi Brian Field
Judaism Your Way
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Littleton

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Sister Margaret Elizabeth Fuhr
Catholic Sisters of St. Francis
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Dr. Amy Gearhart
Arvada United Methodist Church
Arvada

Senior Minister Gretchen Haley
Unitarian Universalist
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Co Pastor Mike Herzog
The Refuge
Northglenn

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Jewish Action Network of
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Genesis Church
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Jefferson Unitarian Church
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