



## **PRESS STATEMENT:**

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Contacts: Remziya Suleyman, 615-618-3000, [remziya@acotn.org](mailto:remziya@acotn.org)

Kasar Abdulla, 615-479-6621, [secretary@amactn.com](mailto:secretary@amactn.com)

## **Community Responds to Anti-Muslim Training for Law Enforcement Muslims Seek Answers from P.O.S.T. & Rutherford County Sheriff**

Nashville, TN- Tennessee Muslims are shocked that a three day training was conducted for Rutherford county law enforcement by the Strategic Engagement Group (SEG), an organization well known for its anti-Muslim rhetoric. SEG is known for inciting hatred towards Muslims and promoting superfluous investigations of law-abiding Muslims to promote fear and division. Training programs that SEG and other anti-Muslim groups provide instill fear and reinforce negative stereotypes that jeopardize the relationship between the community and law enforcement.

While Rutherford County Sheriff Robert Arnold explained his officers were simply trying to learn more about “Muslims” and “Islamic culture,” no Muslims were invited to the training nor were given an opportunity to provide input. Community members across the State are demanding answers to why Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (P.O.S.T.) approved a national group that is infamous for providing biased and misleading information about Islam, Muslims, and prominent Muslim community members and organizations in Tennessee. Daoud Abudiab, co-chair of the American Muslim Advisory Council, stated “In order to continue to foster the relationship between the Muslim community and local law enforcement, the Sheriff must facilitate presentations by reliable organizations and provide accurate materials for sensitivity training.”

Muslim community members are requesting to be a part of the approval and assessment process of such trainings that are provided to law enforcement in the future. Remziya Suleyman, Director of Policy & Administration with the American Center for Outreach calls for a “halt to Muslim sensitivity trainings provided by SEG to Tennessee state law enforcement until P.O.S.T. conducts a full review of the training material”.

Numerous organizations such as the American Muslim Advisory Council have been established to help challenge anti-Muslim rhetoric and encourage collaborations between the community, law enforcement, and other agencies to help ensure all Tennessee communities are safe and welcomed.

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The American Muslim Advisory Council’s mission is to foster education and understanding, organization and empowerment, communication and partnerships with all Tennesseans for the purpose of building trust and protecting all citizens against prejudice, terrorism and other criminal acts.

The American Center for Outreach’s mission is to empower individuals to become integrated, informed and engaged in society by providing the education and assistance they need to become productive citizens on everyday issues in their local communities. By doing so, the American Center for Outreach aims to better connect people and government while supporting citizens in becoming a catalyst for positive change in their neighborhoods and localities.