

U.S. Civil Rights Groups Challenge Rejection of Suit Against NYPD's Muslim Surveillance



New York, January 15 (RHC)-- A U.S. federal appeals court has heard from civil rights groups seeking to reinstate a lawsuit against the New York City Police Department's secret surveillance of Muslims and Arabs in neighboring New Jersey.

District Judge William Martini dismissed the lawsuit in February, saying the program's main harm came not from the anti-Muslim surveillance itself, but from the Associated Press' exposure of it.

Speaking outside the appellate court in Philadelphia, attorney Baher Azmy of the Center for Constitutional Rights said the surveillance was unconstitutional because it focused on religion, nationality and race.

Baher Azmy said: "The police have tools to deal with law enforcement problems, but they can't rely on race or religion or assume that people who are more religious are more dangerous, which is what undergirds the entirety of the NYPD's program. Religious profiling is just as illegal as racial profiling. And

at the Center for Constitutional Rights, we fought against racial profiling and challenged and defeated the city's unconstitutional stop-and-frisk practices, and we aim to do the same here with respect to the city's unconstitutional Muslim spying practices."

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