

February 21, 2014

Sheriff Scott H. Jenkins  
132 W. Davis Street  
Culpeper, Virginia 22701

Dear Sheriff Jenkins,

The undersigned civil rights, faith, community and advocacy groups write to express our deep concern regarding your decision to host a training featuring John Guandolo. Mr. Guandolo has a history of conducting trainings that perpetuate gross stereotypes and distorted information about Islam and Muslims. We strongly urge you to reconsider associating the Culpeper County Sheriff's Office with Mr. Guandolo.

Mr. Guandolo is closely affiliated with ACT! for America, a known anti-Muslim hate group,<sup>1</sup> and he makes baseless, irresponsible and dangerous statements revealing his animus about the American Muslim community. For example, Mr. Guandolo has asserted that American Muslims "do not have a First Amendment right to do anything,"<sup>2</sup> making clear he does not believe Muslim community members are entitled to the same fundamental rights as other Americans. He has also expressed his belief that CIA Director John Brennan is a secret Muslim agent for the Saudi government and associates with known terrorists.<sup>3</sup> The Deputy Police Chief in Columbus, Ohio found Mr. Guandolo's training so appalling that he suspended it after the first day.<sup>4</sup>

Biased trainings by law enforcement have drawn the ire of officials at the highest levels of government, including the Attorney General, the Director of the FBI and Members of Congress. In fact, in response to training materials used by the FBI, then-Chair and then-Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Senators Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins, sent a letter to the White House expressing their concern over biased counterterrorism trainings "spewing inaccurate or even bigoted information to state

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan Lenz, *Acting Out*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Intelligence Report, Fall 2011, Issue Number: 143, available at: <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2011/fall/acting-out>.

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Peterson Beadle, *Tennessee County Sheriff's Office Brings in Anti-Muslim Speaker to Train Officers About Muslim Culture*, ThinkProgress, February 15, 2012, available at: <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/02/15/425947/tennessee-county-sheriffs-office-brings-in-anti-muslim-speaker-to-train-officers-about-muslim-culture/#>.

<sup>3</sup> Josh Glasstetter, *Virginia County Sheriff Hosting Anti-Muslim Training By Disgraced Conspiracy Theorist*, Salon, February 17, 2014, available at: [http://www.salon.com/2014/02/17/virginia\\_country\\_sheriff\\_hosting\\_anti\\_muslim\\_training\\_by\\_disgraced\\_conspiracy\\_theorist\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2014/02/17/virginia_country_sheriff_hosting_anti_muslim_training_by_disgraced_conspiracy_theorist_partner/).

<sup>4</sup> Dina Temple-Raston, *Terrorism Training Casts Pall Over Muslim Employee*, NPR, July 18, 2011, available at: <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/18/137712352/terrorism-training-casts-pall-over-muslim-employee>.

and local law enforcement personnel, stigmatizing Muslim-Americans.”<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, in 2012, FBI Director Robert Mueller ordered a review of all training materials and inflammatory and biased materials were purged.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Culpeper County Sheriff’s Office website, your office is committed to the principles of integrity, respect, honesty and caring for others. Furthermore, law enforcement officers have a special responsibility to ensure that policing targets individuals based on evidence of wrongdoing, rather than on faith tradition. Biased training fosters fear and suspicion of American Muslims amongst law enforcement officials and damages relationships between the two. We hope that your office can set an example for law enforcement officials throughout the country by cancelling the training with Mr. Guandolo and upholding our country’s commitment to liberty and justice for all.

Sincerely,

Muslim Advocates  
Interfaith Alliance  
Center for New Community  
The Sikh Coalition  
Arab American Institute  
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
DRUM – Desis Rising Up & Moving  
The Interfaith Center of New York  
Association of Muslim American Lawyers  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
South Asian Network  
Military Religious Freedom Foundation  
SABA North America  
Muslim Bar Association of New York  
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows

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<sup>5</sup> Ryan J. Reilly, “Lieberman, Collins: If Obama Won’t Do Something About Anti-Muslim Counterterrorism Training, We Will,” Talking Points Memo, September 12, 2011, available at [http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/09/lieberman\\_collins\\_to\\_obama\\_if\\_you\\_dont\\_do\\_something\\_about\\_anti-muslim\\_counterterrorism\\_training\\_we\\_will.php](http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/09/lieberman_collins_to_obama_if_you_dont_do_something_about_anti-muslim_counterterrorism_training_we_will.php).

<sup>6</sup> Spencer Ackerman, *FBI Purges Hundreds of Terrorism Documents in Islamophobia Probe*, Wired, February 15, 2012, available at: <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/02/hundreds-fbi-documents-muslims/>.

