



Islamic Society of Boston
204 Prospect St. Cambridge, MA 02139

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Boston Mosque Details Transparent Interactions with Suspect

The Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) Cambridge mosque continues to mourn with the victims and their families and prays for a speedy recovery for the injured. We are proud of the response of our fellow Bostonians, our collective refusal to be terrorized, and that a level of normalcy has begun to return to our city. It is a testament to our city's spirit of unity, compassion, and pulling together highlighted in President Obama's speech three nights ago.

Details emerged three days ago that both these suspects had been known to our Boston Community – to our public schools, to their local boxing club, to the FBI, and to some of the attendees of our mosque. No one, whether their friends at school, the WBUR reporter who had an extended conversation with one of the suspects, the FBI, or the people who interacted with him in our congregation had any hint that they could perpetrate this horrific attack.

What we do know, as the details related below will show, was that one suspect disagreed with the moderate American-Islamic theology of the ISB Cambridge mosque. Our mosque is one filled with attendees who are teachers, businessmen, doctors, and lawyers, all of whom are committed to the public good. While these suspects did express views counter to our mosque's philosophy, they never expressed any hint of violent sentiments or behavior. If they had, the FBI would have immediately been called. We continue to urge all of our congregants to call 1-800-CALL FBI if they have any further information about these suspects.

Below is the detailed account of the suspects' connection to our mosque related to us from our congregants to date:

- Neither the ISB Board nor staff ever interacted with the suspects. When congregants have shared their knowledge of the suspects, the ISB leadership immediately instructed them to call the FBI.
- The suspects were neither members nor regular attendees of our Cambridge mosque. The older suspect began coming intermittently to our congregational prayers on Friday over a year ago and occasionally to our daily prayers. The younger suspect was rarely seen at the center, coming only occasionally for prayer.
- On November 16, 2012 at our weekly congregational prayer, one of our preachers sermonized that it was appropriate to celebrate national holidays like July 4th and Thanksgiving, just like the birthday of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). The older suspect stood up during the sermon and challenged the preacher, arguing that celebration of any holiday was not allowed in the faith. After the sermon ended and the congregational prayer was finished, the preacher met with the older suspect to share his opinion. The suspect repeatedly argued his viewpoint, and then left.
- On January 18, 2013, one of our preachers noted that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a great person remembered in history. The older suspect stood up, shouted and called him a "non-believer"; said that he was "contaminating people's mind"; and began calling him a hypocrite. People of the congregation, in turn, shouted back at the older suspect, "Leave now!" Due to the congregation's disapproval, he left the sermon.
- After the sermon and the congregational prayer ended, a few volunteer leaders of the mosque sat down with the older suspect and gave him a clear choice: either he stops interrupting sermons and remains silent or he would not be welcomed. While he continued to attend some of the congregational prayers after the January incident, he neither interrupted another sermon nor did he cause any other disturbances.

The ISB leadership must note that this is the account we have to date.

Contacts:



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617-876-3546
isbprospect@gmail.com