

Justice Department Forces Christian Pastor to Testify on Islam Views



By [J. Christian Adams](#) August 31, 2017
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BREAKING UPDATE: This article appeared August 31, 2017. On September 1, 2017, the federal court entirely dismissed the case over DOJ's objections. Story and [opinion here](#).

The United State Department of Justice has issued subpoenas to force a Christian pastor in Virginia to disclose under oath his views on Islam.

Pastor Steve Harrelson of the [Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church](#) in Boston, Virginia, has been served with a wide-ranging subpoena by lawyers for the DOJ's Civil Rights Division. The subpoena demands his presence to testify under oath in response to questions from Justice Department lawyers about his views on Islam as well as several other issues:

Please bring the following documents¹ to your deposition:

1. Any documents received from, sent to, or concerning any of the persons or groups of persons listed below from January 1, 2016, to the present.
 - a. John Egertson;
 - b. Sam McLearen;
 - c. Brad C. Rosenberger;
 - d. C. Jack Frazier;
 - e. Sue D. Hansohn;
 - f. Alexa V. Fritz;
 - g. Steven L. Walker;
 - h. Gary M. Deal;
 - i. William C. Chase, Jr;
 - j. Bobbi Jo Alexis;
2. Any documents that mention, concern, record, or otherwise relate to the Islamic Center Culpeper or any of its members;
3. Any documents that mention, concern, record, or otherwise relate to this instant action; and
4. Any documents that mention, concern, record, or otherwise relate to Islam.

DOJ Subpoena listing documents targets must provide to the government

Harrelson is not a party to any lawsuit or other action brought by the Justice Department. He is a private citizen. The Justice Department subpoena also demands that the pastor bring any papers or documents that he has to his deposition with government lawyers that relate to or mention Islam and turn them over to the government.



Pastor Steven Harrelson

In addition to Harrelson, other Christian third-party private citizens **have also been subpoenaed** to reveal under oath their views on Islam and to deliver any documents they possess related to Islam to federal attorneys.

The Justice Department case alleges that Culpeper County refused to grant a permit to allow the Islamic Center of Culpeper to pump and haul away sewage. The [case](#) was brought under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The mosque purchased land that was unsuitable for a septic system at the time of purchase.

The United States Department of Justice is pursuing the case against Culpeper County and forcing a Christian pastor and other Christians to testify under oath about their views on Islam

even though the mosque itself [has already settled all claims with the county](#). (Full settlement [here](#)).

The fact that the mosque settled with the county led one federal judge [to call into question the Justice Department's zeal](#) to continue to pursue the case even though the purported victim is satisfied and will be building a mosque:

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At a federal court hearing Friday at which the county argued to dismiss the suit for a second time, Judge Moon sided with Culpeper in providing his take on the sustained complaint, saying the continued litigation still puts the Islamic Center at odds with the county.

“It’s an artificial division of a settlement agreement. They tried to come together, said they would try to live together peaceably, now it seems you are putting a wedge between the county and the Islamic Center of Culpeper,” he told the federal attorney arguing against dismissing the case. The Justice Dept.’s continued pursuit of the lawsuit does not help the Islamic Center, Moon added.

The underlying action is a controversial civil court case alleging that Culpeper County discriminated in zoning decisions regarding an application to build a mosque. The case was filed a month after President Trump was elected but **before the inauguration by Acting Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta**. It has continued with unbroken zeal.

Federal law prohibits discrimination in zoning practices against religions. During the Obama administration, a radical new argument was pressed by DOJ lawyers: that zoning boards can be saddled with any "naked animus or resistance from the community." In other words, if some people don't want a mosque in the community, then any zoning decision against the mosque must be because of citizen opposition. It's the everyone-is-racist if anyone-is-racist theory advanced by academia and others.

The lawyers on the subpoena documents are listed as **Onjil McEachin and Sameena Shina Majeed**.

Onjil McEachin came to the Justice Department in the last couple of years from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where McEachin’s office was deeply involved in advancing disparate impact legal theories to prove racial discrimination.

Sameena Majeed was formerly a lawyer with the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia and won the Steere Prize in Women’s Studies at Yale for her work entitled “Feminist Voices: An Ethnographic Examination of Feminist Consciousness in Urban Pakistani Women.”

The case was brought by the Civil Rights Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section. The hiring practices of the Civil Rights Division under President Obama has been the feature of PJ Media’s [Every Single One series](#) and an inspector general Report of the Department of Justice. (The lawyers featured in the Every Single One Series from that section can be viewed [here](#).) After obtaining resumes of lawyer hires after PJ Media was forced to file a lawsuit against

the DOJ, the series revealed that **under President Obama, every single one of the lawyers hired was a partisan or ideological leftist.** This led the inspector general to recommend that the department end certain hiring criteria that have led to the perception that only lawyers of a certain leftist ideological perspective are hired.

Assistant Attorney General Tom Perez refused to implement the recommendations of the inspector general.

The *Washington Post* obtained and [reported](#) information in a story about the controversial case that the Culpeper sheriff had conducted seminars on jihadi networks in the United States -- a fact the *Washington Post* found to be relevant to the zoning dispute.

The county sheriff has [previously come under fire](#) for hosting a seminar on “Jihadi Networks in America” led by a former FBI agent who claims terrorists control most leading American Muslim groups.

Since President Trump’s inauguration, the [notorious](#) Civil Rights Division has been run by caretakers without a Senate-confirmed political appointee head. President Trump has appointed Eric Dreiband to head the Civil Rights Division.

Next week, **senators have a chance to ask about whether it is a good use of resources to subpoena Christian pastors to ask them about their views on Islam when in a case where the primary parties have already settled.**