

Muslim UT Austin student assaulted after leaving mosque

Eddie Haywood
11 April 2024

On Friday at 11 p.m., a Muslim student at the University of Texas at Austin along with a companion were reportedly assaulted by three men after leaving a mosque and proceeding on foot to the UT Austin campus approximately a half-mile away. The names of the student and his companion have not been made public to protect their anonymity.

In a press release on Tuesday, the Austin branch of the Muslim civil rights advocacy organization, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), reported that they had requested Austin police to investigate the alleged attack as a hate crime.

In reporting the incident to CAIR, the UT Austin student stated he was wearing a kurta shalwar, the apparel common to Muslims of South Asian descent, when the student and his companion were accosted by the three men.

The three men reportedly approached the two provocatively, mocking them with vulgar mimicry of Arabic and Islamic phrases, as well as using bigoted epithets toward the Muslim student.

The three men obstructed their path, and punched the student, giving the student cuts and bruises. One man reportedly placed his hand in his pocket, and claimed to have a weapon, and threatened the two.

Austin police confirmed to media that it was aware of the alleged assault and acknowledged that the department is reviewing the attack as a “bias-motivated” incident. Facilitating that effort, the department has assigned officers with the Hate Crime division to investigate the attack.

“If a crime has been committed and the Hate Crime Committee determined that they believe the crime was committed due to bias or prejudice, then they will inform the FBI of the incident, if charges are pressed or an arrest is made, the Hate Crime Committee also

informs the prosecutor’s office,” the Austin Police Department said in a statement.

Operations Manager for CAIR Austin, Shaimaa Zayan, said in a statement, “No human being should feel unsafe wearing their traditional clothes in public. And when this happens in Austin, a city that cherishes cultural diversity, it is even more traumatizing.”

For its part, the university administration told media that it was aware of the incident, and stated, “UT remains committed to the safety and well-being of every member of our University community and has no tolerance for violence or other hateful actions against any of our community members, including those in our Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab communities.”

The attack follows several similar incidents on or near the UT Austin campus and across the US as government officials and university administrators seek to suppress the eruption of popular opposition to the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, which has manifested in sustained demonstrations attended by millions in the US and around the world for more than six months.

On April 2, CAIR released its 2024 civil rights report: “Fatal: The Resurgence of Anti-Muslim Hate,” in which the organization describes “the worst wave of anti-Muslim bigotry witnessed in its 30-year history.”

CAIR reports a 419 percent rise in anti-Muslim incidents occurring across the United States, and states that it has received more than 8,000 complaints, the highest amount in the organization’s 30-year history. The current wave dwarfs the amount of complaints CAIR received after the post 9/11 wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Trump’s antidemocratic “Muslim ban.”

In a few of the more stark examples, on February 4 of this year, 23-year old Palestinian Zacharia Doar and two friends were leaving an anti-genocide protest held

on the UT Austin campus, when Doar was stabbed in the chest. 36-year old Bert Baker, who shouted anti-Muslim obscenities at the men has been charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and carrying out a hate crime.

On October 14, 2023 prosecutors in Illinois charged Joseph Czuba with the stabbing death of 6-year old Palestinian-American Wadea Al-Fayoume and stabbing his mother, Hanaan Shahin, who was severely wounded but survived. During the deranged attack, Czuba shouted anti-Muslim curses at the two.

On November 25, 2023 in Burlington, Vermont, three Palestinian-American students, Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid, and Tahseen Ahmed were shot walking to Awartani's grandmother's home. Although badly wounded, the three survived, with Awartani left paralyzed below the chest. Prosecutors charged Jason J. Eaton, a right-wing self-described libertarian who had espoused anti-vaccine conspiracy theories, in the attack.

The rise in attacks against Muslims goes hand in hand with the anti-democratic campaign conducted by the ruling class against the mass opposition by youth and workers to the genocide in Gaza, which have absurdly been cast as antisemitic.

Over the duration of six months of the bloody campaign against Gaza, millions of university students and workers have expressed popular outrage to the grave crime in demonstrations held around the world.

The wave of anti-Muslim bigotry and violence is intrinsically tied to the barbarous campaign against Gaza conducted by Israel with the full support and collaboration of the Biden Administration.

After decades of decline of American capitalism and global influence, Washington has turned to war and genocide to reassert its supremacy over world affairs.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote in October after the murder of Wadea Al-Fayoume, "[The rise of violence against Muslims] are not just random incidents, but rather the product of a deliberate campaign directed from the highest levels of the national-security apparatus to whip up anti-Muslim bigotry and mobilize it in support of a US military intervention in the Middle East that has no popular support."

After six months of relentless bombardment and murder in Gaza, leading to the mass starvation and spreading of disease among the population, the US and

Israel have demonstrated that they are impervious to appeals by the masses to end the war.

What is required to halt the genocide and to defend fundamental civil liberties is a socialist movement of the working class, independent of all the capitalist parties.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact