

June 9, 2026

**Subject: An Open Letter Urging Congress Members to Support H.R. 8236 - Designating Hamas Affiliates in America Act of 2026**

Dear Members of Congress:

We write as a coalition of think tanks, research institutions, and advocacy organizations to call on Congress members to co-sponsor and support H.R. 8236 - the Designating Hamas Affiliates in America Act. Introduced by Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas), this legislation directs the Department of Treasury to list the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).<sup>1</sup>

Americans have waited long enough. CAIR's connections to terrorism go back to before it was founded in 1994 by individuals previously affiliated with the Islamic Association of Palestine,<sup>2</sup> a Hamas-aligned organization that federal courts later found financially liable for Hamas violence.<sup>3</sup> These ties extend to as recently as October 2025, when CAIR-Ohio leader Khalid Turaani hosted Majed al-Zeer, a Specially Designated National and Hamas terrorist, at an online forum.<sup>4</sup>

If passed, H.R. 8236 will freeze CAIR's assets, prohibit Americans from engaging in transactions with it, and revoke CAIR's tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. This legislation follows multiple legal efforts to designate the self-described Muslim civil liberties organization as a terrorist entity, including executive orders from governors in Florida<sup>5</sup> and Texas,<sup>6</sup> and a separate congressional bill that seeks to label CAIR as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.<sup>7</sup> While these previous efforts are commendable, they are too narrow in scope or fail to align with legal precedent.

Under Executive Order 13224, the U.S. Department of Treasury may list entities as SDGTs that provide material support and resources to terrorist groups. This executive action comes with civil penalties that are appropriate for groups like CAIR, which typically employ lawful means in furtherance of illicit activities. Since the September 11 attacks, at least nine domestic nonprofits have been listed as SDGTs

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<sup>1</sup> "H.R. 8236 - Designating Hamas Affiliates in America Act of 2026." (2026). Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/8236>

<sup>2</sup> Vidino, Lorenzo. (2023). "The Hamas Networks in America: A Short History." George Washington University Program on Extremism. <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/2023-10/hamas-networks-final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Shankar, Abha. (2022). "Judge Finds Sufficient Evidence Linking AMP to Hamas Supporters for Lawsuit to Proceed." Investigative Project on Terrorism. <https://www.investigativeproject.org/9173/judge-finds-sufficient-evidence-linking-amp-to>

<sup>4</sup> Burns, Lara, Jonas, Barry, and Collins, David. (2025). "CAIR—Why History is Important." George Washington University Program on Extremism. [https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/2025-11/CAIR\\_Revised.pdf](https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5746/files/2025-11/CAIR_Revised.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> "Executive Order 25-244." (2025). State of Florida Office of the Governor. <https://www.flgov.com/eog/sites/default/files/executive-orders/2025/EO%2025-244.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> "A proclamation designating the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR as Foreign Terrorist and Transnational Criminal Organizations under the Texas Penal and Texas Property Codes." (2025). Office of the Texas Governor. [https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/PROC\\_declarating\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood\\_and\\_CAIR\\_Transnational\\_Criminal\\_Organizations\\_IMAGE\\_11-18-2025.pdf](https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/PROC_declarating_Muslim_Brotherhood_and_CAIR_Transnational_Criminal_Organizations_IMAGE_11-18-2025.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> "H.R. 4097 - Designating CAIR as a Terrorist Organization Act." (2025). Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4097/text>

and subsequently have lost their tax exemptions, establishing a strong precedent for dismantling terror-linked charitable organizations.<sup>8</sup>

If CAIR does not meet the criteria for designation, it is difficult to understand why Specially Designated Global Terrorist sanctions exist. Federal prosecutors and FBI agents in *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation* alleged that CAIR was founded out of a scheme to secretly promote Hamas interests in the United States.<sup>9</sup> H.R. 8236 establishes how seven CAIR members have been arrested, convicted, or deported for terrorism-related crimes, including Ghassan Elashi, who was sentenced to 65 years in prison for funneling over \$12 million to Hamas.<sup>10</sup> CAIR was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in Elashi's trial, and although a district court later sealed these records, Judge Jorge Solis refused to strike CAIR's name from the list, ruling that prosecutors demonstrated "ample evidence to establish the associations of CAIR ... with Hamas."<sup>11</sup>

As the most well-known Islamist organization in North America, CAIR employs a formidable network of lawyers and media specialists to promote an anti-American, Islamist agenda, from dismantling border protections<sup>12</sup> to advocating for convicted terrorists.<sup>13</sup> Through its chapters and affiliates, including political action committees and lobbying shops, CAIR seeks to establish a special status for Islam and unique privileges for Muslims. For example, CAIR has aggressively lobbied for a bill in Massachusetts that would establish a commission to recommend Muslims for political appointments, an arrangement that raises serious Establishment Clause concerns.<sup>14</sup>

Designating CAIR under H.R. 8236 should be a bipartisan legislative priority for the 119th Congress. While Republican members of the House Sharia-Free America Caucus should be among the first to co-sponsor this legislation, Democrats have also denounced the nonprofit's history of extremism and terrorist affiliations. The Obama administration continued a George W. Bush-era FBI policy of forbidding outreach with CAIR,<sup>15</sup> while the Biden administration formally disavowed the organization in response to remarks from its longtime director Nihad Awad, who declared that he was "happy to see" the October 7 attacks in Israel.<sup>16</sup> In Maryland, a Democratic attorney general effectively removed two successive CAIR

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<sup>8</sup> "Suspension pursuant to Code Section 501(p)." (2025). Internal Revenue Service. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/suspensions-pursuant-to-code-section-501p>

<sup>9</sup> "FBI: CAIR is a front group, and Holy Land Foundation tapped Hamas clerics for fundraisers." (2008). *The Dallas Morning News*. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/crime/2008/10/07/fbi-cair-is-a-front-group-and-holy-land-foundation-tapped-hamas-clerics-for-fundraisers/>

<sup>10</sup> Pipes, Daniel. (2010). "CAIR's Legal Tribulations: The Terrorism Charges." Daniel Pipes Blog. <https://www.danielpipes.org/blog/2003/06/cairs-legal-tribulations>

<sup>11</sup> *USA v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development*. (2009). "Memorandum Opinion Order." U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. [https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case\\_docs/1425.pdf](https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1425.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> "CAIR to Deliver Oral Arguments in Secret Federal Terror Watchlist/No Fly List Case." (2024). CAIR. [https://www.cair.com/press\\_releases/cair-to-deliver-oral-arguments-in-secret-federal-terror-watchlist-no-fly-list-case/](https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-to-deliver-oral-arguments-in-secret-federal-terror-watchlist-no-fly-list-case/)

<sup>13</sup> "Six Facts on the Texas Synagogue Terror Attack." (2022). Middle East Forum. <https://www.meforum.org/six-facts-on-the-texas-synagogue-terror-attack>

<sup>14</sup> "CAIR-MA to Host Historic Legislative Briefing and Muslim Lobby Day at the State House, Advocating for Muslim Commission Bill H.3351/S.2134." (2025). CAIR. [https://www.cair.com/press\\_releases/cair-ma-to-host-historic-legislative-briefing-and-muslim-lobby-day-at-the-state-house-advocating-for-muslim-commission-bill-h-3351-s-2134/](https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-ma-to-host-historic-legislative-briefing-and-muslim-lobby-day-at-the-state-house-advocating-for-muslim-commission-bill-h-3351-s-2134/)

<sup>15</sup> "Review of FBI Interactions with the Council on American-Islamic Relations." (2013). U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-J37-PURL-gpo133765/pdf/GOVPUB-J37-PURL-gpo133765.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Baker, Peter. (2023). "White House Disavows U.S. Islamic Group After Leaders Oct. 7 Remarks." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/us/politics/white-house-cair-nihad-awad.html>

officials from a state hate crimes commission for bigoted or homophobic statements, and Maryland Democrats passed a state law ensuring CAIR was no longer represented on the same commission.<sup>17</sup>

H.R. 8236 corrects three decades of regulatory failure, which has allowed a Hamas-aligned support group to collect tax-free donations, subverting public safety at home and sabotaging U.S. interests abroad. Roy's bill meets the standards for designation under E.O. 13224, aligns with legal precedent, and applies appropriate coercive penalties to discourage material support for terrorism in the American charitable sector.

We strongly urge House members to co-sponsor and pass H.R. 8236, and we call on the Senate to introduce and support a companion bill. By co-sponsoring this legislation, Congress members also signal support for the Treasury Department to independently designate CAIR under existing statutory authority.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your support.

Sincerely,



<sup>17</sup> "Again, an Islamist Outed from Maryland's Hate Crimes Commission; MEF's Role." (2024). Middle East Forum. <https://www.meforum.org/again-an-islamist-outed-from-marylands-hate-crimes-commission-mefs-role>



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Middle East Forum

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Alliance Against Islamic Republic of Iran Apologists

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American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council

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CLARITy Coalition

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Global Peace for Israel

Hindu American Foundation

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