



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

MLFA.ORG

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Assalamu' alaykum dear supporter,

For over two decades, we have been the entity defending Muslims in America at the federal level, and we are just getting started. Our mission is to advance equality and justice for American Muslim individuals and organizations by promoting legal compliance and protecting their rights in matters concerning national security law.

MLFA's legal division, with your support, litigated over 100 cases in 2022, opened 11 new cases, and responded to over 200 calls from our community across the nation. We merged with the Constitutional Law Center for Muslims in America (CLCMA), creating a more unified stance defending the civil rights and liberties of American Muslims. Through our strategic partnership with Indiana University's Lilly School of Philanthropy, our Ihsan Standard Project reached over 500 individuals through training, presentations, and legal screenings. The Ihsan Standard project offers a Legal Clinic focused on governance, risk and compliance along with legal audits for Muslims organizations and masjids across the nation. Through a grant we received from the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of North America (IFANCA), we began foundational work for our Religious Accommodation in Institutions and Halal Food Federal Expansion Project. We also funded Opheliasmedia Films to create a documentary on the "Holy Land Foundation Five" case. The documentary will capture the early history of the Holy Land Foundation crucial to

understanding not only the role of the Holy Land Foundation as a global charity but also the political climate from the years before and after 9/11.

With your generous support, it was possible to build legal power, to safeguard our communities, to continue to empower the powerless, and to fortify American Muslim organizations. 9/11 changed the laws and changed the way Muslims are perceived world wide. Two decades later we are still enduring the consequences that followed. Changing the law is not easy but it is possible. Laws exist to ensure social cohesion. In order to change or amend the laws and to achieve national security reform, we must first change community values and build community awareness. A Law must reflect the society it governs and people need to be aware of their rights and responsibilities to question the law and demand to change it. That's how we tackle the entrenched religious inequality and advance distributive justice and equal opportunity, creating an empowered community. That's how we make generational, societal and legal change, together.

Your sister in faith for justice,

Arshia Ali-Khan

CEO, Muslim Legal Fund of America





VISION

An America in which constitutional rights and liberties are upheld equally for all, regardless of ethnicity, religion or cultural heritage.

MISSION

To advance equality and justice for American Muslim organizations and individuals by promoting legal compliance and protecting their rights in matters concerning national security law.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Justice
- Courage
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Community



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1

STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THE MUSLIM NONPROFIT COMMUNITY

MLFA is recognized by the American Muslim nonprofit community as the leading resource for legal counsel and technical legal support in the areas of compliance, mitigation of risk from government scrutiny, and mission impact.

2

PREVENT THE UNWARRANTED INDICTMENT OF AMERICAN MUSLIM INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

MLFA has contributed to an overall decrease in the number of American Muslim organizations and individuals adversely impacted by FBI, Homeland Security and/or Treasury investigations and related enforcement actions. MLFA is considered a top-of-mind resource and first responder of choice among American Muslim organizations and leadership when they are at risk of federal investigation as a result of current national security policies.

3

INCREASE REACH AND EFFECT OF IMPACT LITIGATION

MLFA is recognized as a leader in national security-related legal defense for American Muslim nonprofits and their leadership with national reach and visibility. MLFA has built a demonstrated record of challenging the lack of due process and unfair administration of extreme vetting and guilt by association policies and regulations resulting in government encroachment on the civil liberties of American Muslims.





EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:



Dr. Hatem Bazian
Chairman

Co-Founder Zaytuna College
Executive Director, Islamophobia
Studies Center
Professor UC Berkeley



Mouffa Nahhas
Treasurer

President - Foods International of
Dallas



Jamal Suleiman
Secretary

Partner at Suleiman, Amaidas,
Rezai Law Firm, PLLC



John Davidoff
Board Advisor

Founder and Chief
Mission Driver
Davidoff Strategy

ADMINISTRATION:

Arshia Ali-Khan, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer

Maria Laura Guzman
Executive Assistant to CEO

Ayman Aishat
Director of Community Engagement & Stewardship

Jeannine Sherman
Content Writer

Mujahid Rasul
Donor Relations Account Manager

MLFA'S LEGAL DIVISION:

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW CENTER FOR MUSLIMS IN AMERICA (CLCMA)

LEGAL TEAM: ATTORNEYS

CRIMINAL LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

Charles Swift
Executive Director & Counsel/Criminal Department Head

Catherine McDonald
Managing Attorney / Training & Development Manager

Sufa Khalid
Legal Fellow

Linda Moreno
Criminal Defense Attorney Associate

LEGAL COMMITTEE:



Jamal Suleiman

Chair of Legal Committee

Partner at Suleiman, Amaidas, Rezai Law Firm, PLLC



Ferdose al-Taie, Esq.

Legal Committee Officer

Akermann LLP



Naveed Husain, Esq.

Legal Committee Officer

Farooqi & Husain LLC



Shereen El Domeiri, Esq.

Legal Committee Officer

Domeiri PLLC



Furqan Sunny Azhar, Esq.

Legal Committee Officer

Azhar & Azhar, PLLC

CIVIL LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

Christina A. Jump

Civil Litigation Department Head

Alyssa Morrison

Civil Litigation Staff Attorney

Najmu Mohseen

Civil Litigation Staff Attorney

Samira Elhosary

Legal Fellow

IMMIGRATION LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

Kathryn H. Brady

Immigration Department Head

Franchel Daniel

Immigration Staff Attorney

PARALEGALS:

April Tremble

Litigation Paralegal

Naireesa Khan

Litigation Paralegal

CONSULTANTS:

Nataly Castaño

Donor Engagement Associate

Sameer Afsar

Sales Force Architect

Lynette Morris

Merger Project Management

Eaman Shebley

CJBS Accounting Supervisor

Laurie McParlane

CJBS Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payables

Raed Dibeh

Principal consultant for RDB IT services Inc.

Andrew McCullough

Consultant for RDB IT services Inc.

Sajjad Husain

Sunan Designs

Rosha Jones

Organizational Attorney (Folger Levin LLP)

Shawn Jough

HR consultant (Strategic HR Advisory)

Intuitive Solutions

Development Consultants

Basil Idbeis

Financial Analyst

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTION

JANUARY 2022

Co-funded The Holy Land Documentary

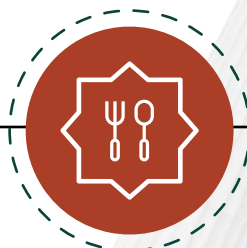
This powerful documentary will share the perspective from the "other side" and the consequences of entrenched Islamophobia and gross overreach by the US justice systems.



JUNE 2022

Honoring The Life & Legacy of Tarek al Kadri:

In 2022, Mussab Ali was the award recipient, currently attending Harvard Law School and intends to advance Muslim issues through the legislative process.



MARCH 2022

Launched Religious Accommodation in Institutions and Halal Food Federal Expansion Project: Islam in Prisons

A project to create a practical solution to the request for halal meals. The goal is (1) creating broader awareness and buy-in of the problem, and (2) establishing positive legal precedent, which will facilitate the availability of halal meals in prisons.

JUNE 2022

Appointed Arshia Ali-Khan as CEO

Arshia Ali-Khan was appointed on June 17, 2022, as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA).

JULY 2022

MLFA Moves - We have a New Address

The Muslim Legal Fund of America moved into a new office with its legal division on July 11, 2022.



AUGUST 2022

Rebranding of MLFA

The shield of our new logo shows we are here to protect and defend the Muslim community. The pillar reflects our rooted dedication to liberty and justice for all.

OCTOBER 2022

American Muslim Legal Ecosystem (AMLE)

In collaboration with CAIR-CHI, we were awarded a \$200,000 grant to create the AMLE - a resource and referral database portal that will be an immediate support for Muslims seeking legal assistance and a stakeholder map illustrating Muslim-centric legal support and service organizations in the USA.

OCTOBER 2022

Merger of CLCMA with MLFA

On October 11, 2022, the Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA) acquired the Constitutional Law Center for Muslims in America (CLCMA) to create a stronger, unified entity dedicated to defending and protecting civil liberties and rights for American Muslims.

OUR IMPACT

CIVIL LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

114 Total # of
intake cases

89 Total # of
active cases

3 Total # of
new cases



TO REVIEW MORE
OF OUR **CASES**,
SCAN NOW!



FIGHTING RELIGION-BASED OPPRESSION:

- The Civil Department challenged inconsistencies across federal courts on what plaintiffs need to show as proof that they are at risk of future harm.
- Filed the first-ever lawsuit against the Terrorist Screening Center to obtain documents about its policies and procedures.
- We challenged a Texas Anti-BDS Law, which violates the Constitution by restricting investment decisions based on political views instead of possible investments for employees' retirement benefits.
- Filed a lawsuit challenging the government's efforts to restrict Muslim leaders' ability to travel and silence their efforts to benefit the Muslim community.
- Represented a client in discrimination case involving religious conversion, petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to question the agency's decision not to complete processing due to national security concerns without proof of risk.

FEATURED CASE: HAISAM ELSHARKAWI - FIGHTING STRUCTURAL ISLAMOPHOBIA

Haisam Elsharkawi's Supreme Court case seeks to level the playing field for all Americans in their attempts to protect themselves from government action through legal channels.

After being detained and having his phones taken away by authorities at an airport back in 2017, he was awarded a settlement of \$20,000 due to false arrest/false imprisonment, battering, negligence and other various alleged violations. Following two appeals to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Civil Litigation department filed a petition with the Supreme Court looking to establish consistent standards for the burdens placed on plaintiffs seeking court protection from future harms. This case could result in lasting benefits for Americans across the nation.

OUR IMPACT

CRIMINAL LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

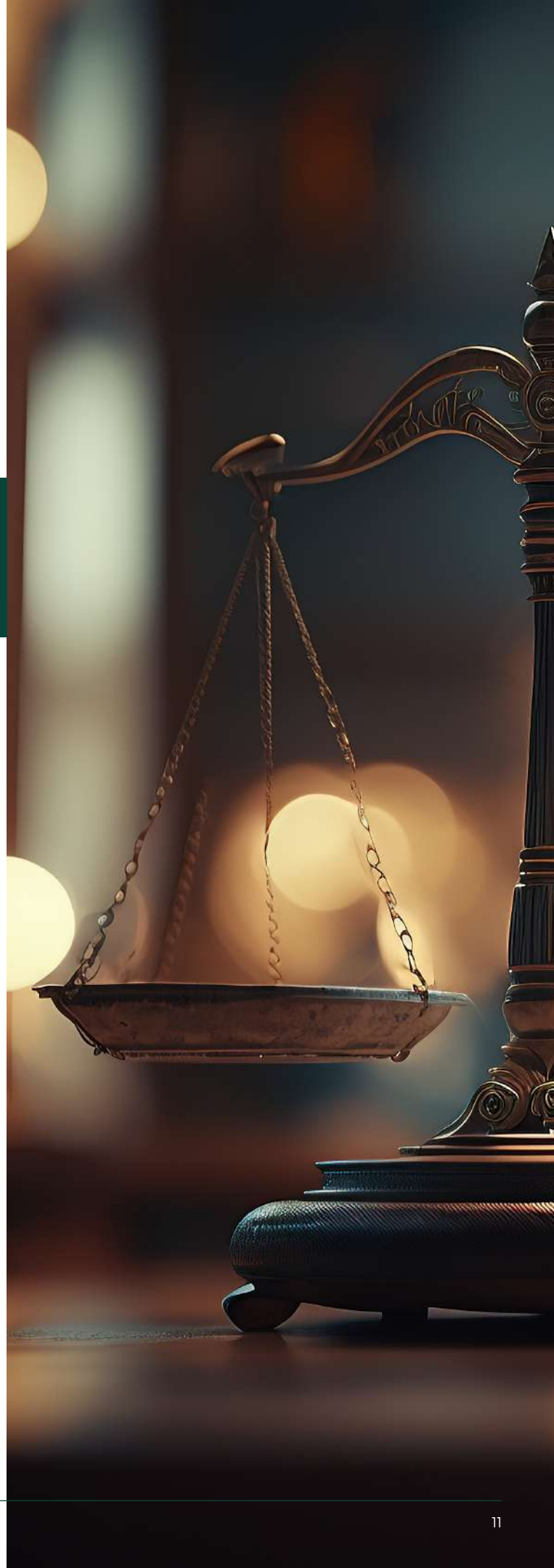
47 Total # of
intake cases

10 Total # of
cases litigated

5 Total # of
new cases



TO REVIEW MORE
OF OUR **CASES**,
SCAN NOW!





HOLDING OUR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE:

- Kept out significant portions of highly prejudicial and irrelevant evidence at trial.
- Argued for downward variance of client's sentence based on mental health grounds, lack of criminal history, and family support.
- Argued the injustice of the terrorism enhancement and its impact, which was the reason for giving a much lower sentence than the government requested.
- Challenged government's protective measures request to classify evidence related to undercover witnesses, measures to close the courtroom, and other courtroom protective measures. Appealed the criminal convictions of making false statements in a terrorism investigation in clear entrapment cases.

FEATURED CASE: ALEXANDER SMITH - ESTABLISHING PRECEDENT AFTER AN FBI ENTRAPMENT

MLFA's Criminal Department successfully represented Alexander Smith as co-counsel in the appeal of an FBI entrapment case. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's decision and remanded it for resentencing. In doing so they established several important precedents. First, an intent to travel to Syria during the armed conflict was not illegal where there was no pre-existing criminal intent or existing evidence implicating otherwise. The Court further emphasized how government agents may have manipulated and "implanted . . . an innocent person's mind" with criminal intents by having two sets of agents ask about conversations raised earlier on the topic of ISIS. The Fourth Circuit Court also outlined their own theory that FBI entrapment had occurred due to conversations instigated by Government agents and further noted how subsequent questioning could have planted criminal intent within an innocent person.

Finally, the Court held that Mr. Smith's two convictions arising from a single interrogation constituted a violation of the "double jeopardy" clause in the Fifth Amendment, and vacated Mr. Smith's second count of conviction. The Court returned Mr. Smith's case to the District Court for resentencing with instructions that the Court also reconsider the terrorism enhancement applied to Mr. Smith's initial state. Mr. Smith is currently free on bond while awaiting re-sentencing.

OUR IMPACT

IMMIGRATION LITIGATION DEPARTMENT

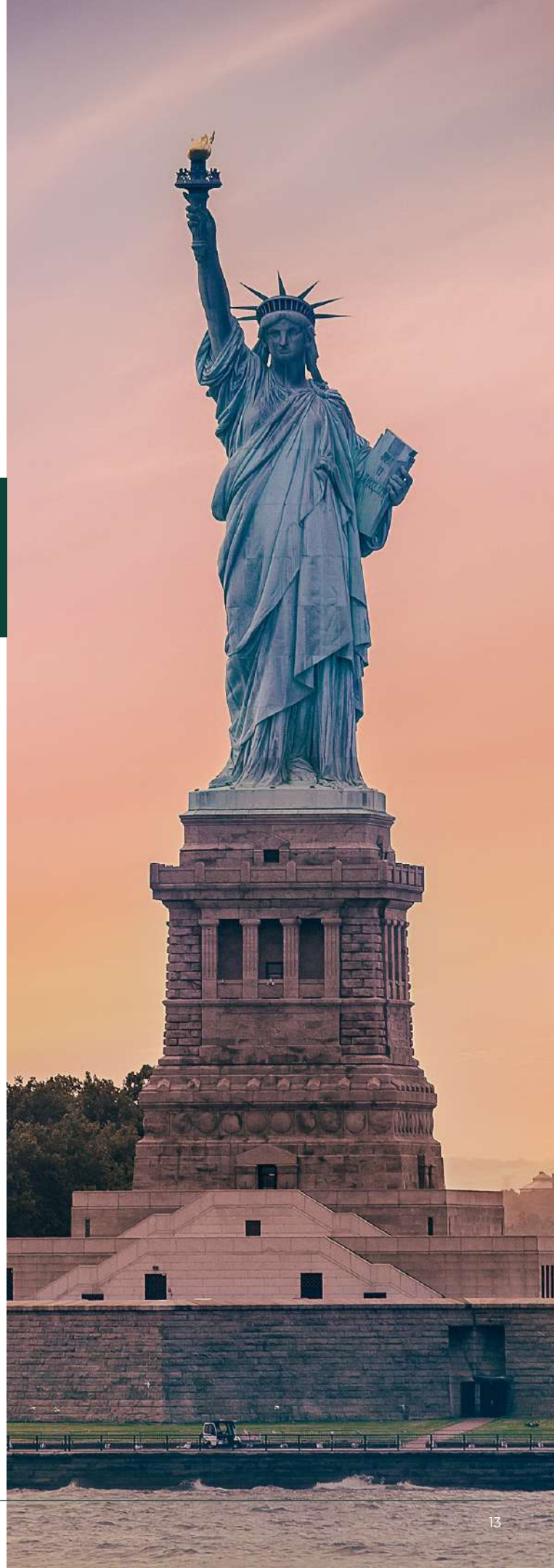
59 Total # of
intake cases

32 Total # of
active cases

91 Total # of
processed
cases



TO REVIEW MORE
OF OUR **CASES**,
SCAN NOW!





FROM FEDERAL COURT LITIGATION TO OATH OF ALLEGIANCE:

- Assisted a client in acquiring naturalization, resulting in taking the Oath of Allegiance and receiving a U.S. passport.
- Successfully defending against government litigation, leading to a Board of Immigration Appeals order for a more detailed version of the earlier oral decision.
- Assisted a client with green card renewal process that has been delayed due to ties with now defunct Islamic charities.
- Representing a client in a Federal Court case involving refiled naturalization application at USCIS challenging government's delay.

FEATURED CASE: HEMZA LEFSIH - U.S. CITIZENSHIP GRANTED AFTER YEARS OF HARASSMENT

Hemza Lefsih's naturalization application was approved after our Immigration Department spearheaded this complicated case. Hemza took the Oath of Allegiance in 2022 and received his U.S. citizenship and passport. Hemza arrived in the U.S. via the diversity visa lottery granting him legal permanent residency in 2010.

Unfortunately, he was approached by federal agents who tried to coerce him into becoming a confidential informant in the Muslim community. When he refused, he faced excruciating obstacles in obtaining his naturalized citizenship. He was charged criminally, arrested, and jailed under the false logic that he lied on his application by failing to mention traffic citations in his record, but he was later acquitted on all charges.

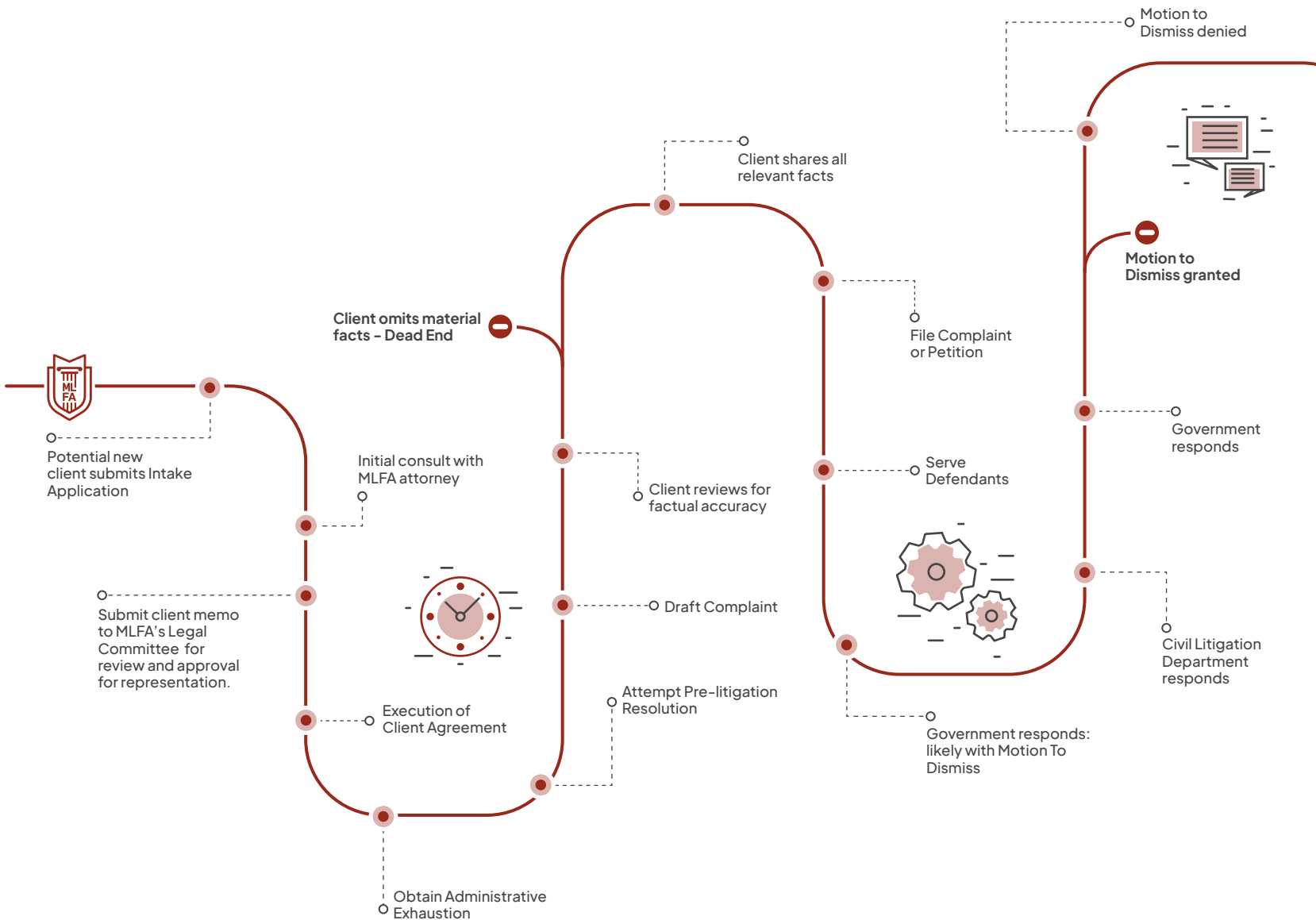
In 2019, Hemza sought MLFA's help to obtain his U.S. citizenship after his criminal conviction had been vacated due to a complicated timeline of events that included harassment by a federal agent, wrongful accusations, and detention. Our expert legal team navigated these complex conditions and demonstrated that Hemza met the requirements for naturalization.

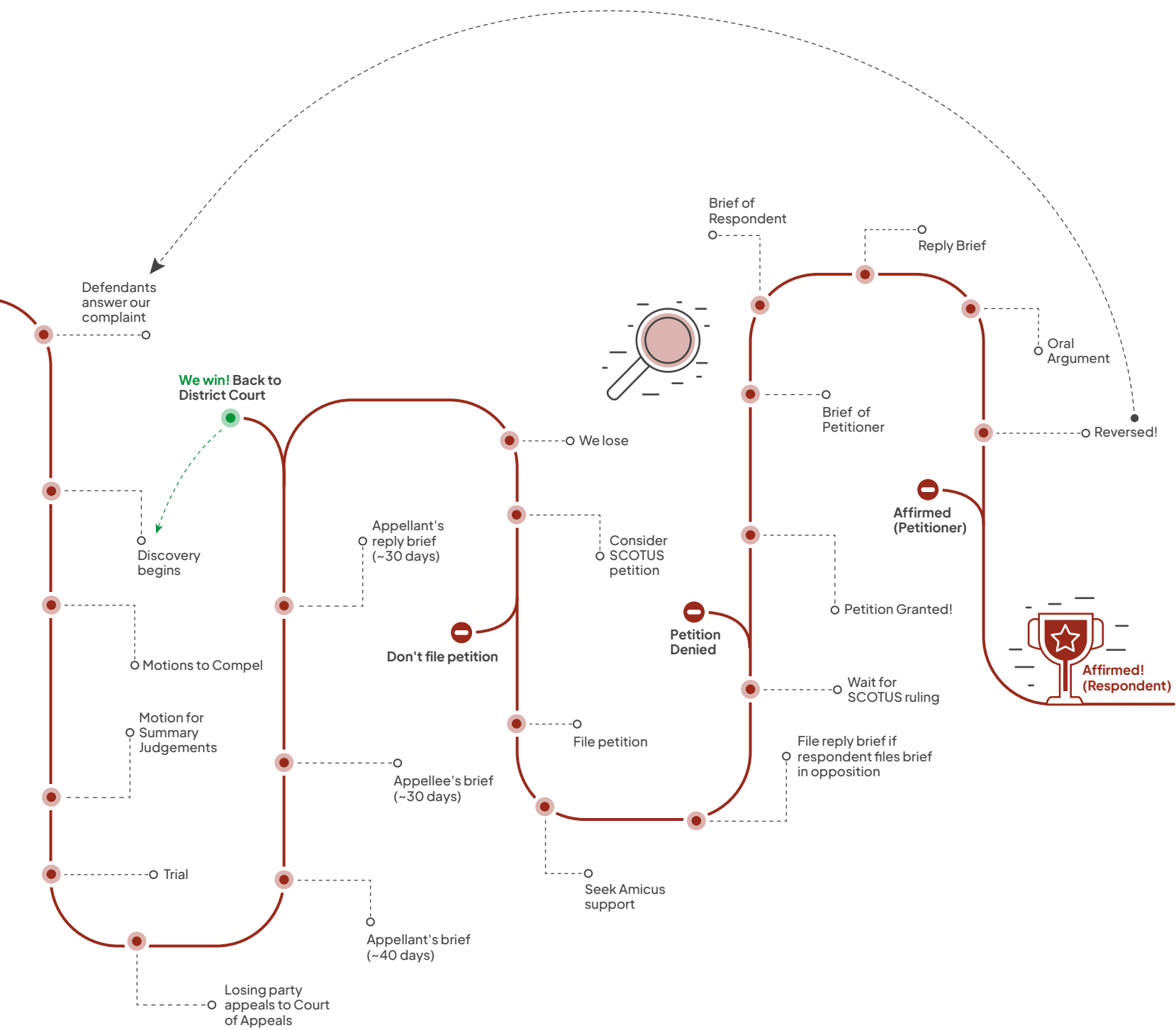
This case sets a precedent that protects not only Hemza but also other American Muslims who may find themselves in similar situations in need of legal defense. The importance of organizations like MLFA and its legal division cannot be overstated as they continue to put pressure on institutions that have historically failed to recognize the injuries caused by harassment, humiliation, and hostility toward Muslim communities.

THE ANATOMY OF A CASE

THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE CIVIL LITIGATION PROCESS

The following diagram visually illustrates the key stages in the civil litigation process. From initial consultation with an attorney to post-trial appeal, it outlines each step of pursuing justice through civil litigation. It begins with the filing of a complaint and its service on the defendant, followed by discovery where evidence is exchanged and depositions taken. Pre-trial motions are then filed before a judge or jury decides the final verdict. If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome, an appeal can be made to have their case reviewed by a higher court.







LILLY FAMILY
SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

THE IHSAN STANDARD PROJECT

A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH INDIANA UNIVERSITY & MLFA

The Muslim Legal Fund of America founded and funded The Ihsan Standard project as we incubate our Non-Profit Division. The Ihsan Standard project is dedicated to protecting and addressing the resource challenges of minority led and U.S. Muslim nonprofits with rigorous research and a supportive legal ecosystem. Like other faith-based communities, U.S. Muslims rely upon the nonprofit sector to promote the public good and sustain and build religious identity. The U.S. Muslim nonprofit subsector is relatively young, diverse, and quickly expanding. Yet, it also experiences internal and external friction, including a disparate amount of scrutiny in law, policy, and practice. The U.S. Muslim nonprofit subsector faces overlapping challenges with other minority-led nonprofits. Overall, it is under-resourced. Legal advice and healthy governance practices can be critical to the success of U.S. Muslim and minority-led nonprofits. "Ihsan" promotes continual growth toward the highest levels of excellence and beautification, including philanthropic giving. The Ihsan Standard adopts the word 'Ihsan' to encourage the highest levels of leadership excellence.

Our program goal is to protect and advance the equitable inclusion of U.S. Muslim nonprofits and promote a shared understanding and knowledge base across nonprofit, legal, and academic communities. The Ihsan Standard adopted a 3-part approach in 2022: 1) training and presentations, 2) legal clinic, and 3) research.

OUR IHSAN TEAM:

- Shariq Siddiqui, JD PhD
- Afshan Paarlberg, JD
- Sana Saleem, JD
- Zeeshan Noor, Ph.D.
- Van Stevie Kabila Bibila, BA
- Ifeoma Akobi, MA
- Amal Siddiqui

ADVISORY COUNCIL:

- Arshia Ali-Khan, Muslim Legal Fund of America
- Adeel Bashir, American Muslim Bar Association
- Asifa Quraishi-Landes, Muslim Advocates
- Elvia Castro, BBB Charitable Giving Wise Alliance
- Eric Amarante, University of Tennessee College of Law
- Hiba Alami, IMAN Associates
- Asad Rahman, National Association of Muslim Lawyers
- The Honorable David Shaheed, Judge Emeritus

TRAININGS

A total of 15 training and presentations for the U.S. Muslim nonprofits were provided to three key stakeholders: nonprofit leaders, lawyers, and researchers. Hosted two symposiums: 1) Law and Policy Perspectives on Muslim Philanthropy Symposium, and 2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Through a Muslim Lens

LEGAL CLINIC

23 requests for assistance were received with 21 consultations being held and 10 cases represented. Issues addressed varied from 501(c)(3) dissolution to international charitable work reviews.

RESEARCH

The Ihsan Standard team goal is to conduct research on a representative sample of registered U.S. Muslim charities, exploring DEI policies and increased collaboration with other nonprofits. An organizational survey was developed for leaders and board members of such organizations to better understand behaviors, decision-making practices and related transparency issues, and 251 responses were compiled for final statistical analysis. The main report from this project, 'Understanding Nonprofit Governance and DEI Practices Among Marginalized Communities for a More Just & Inclusive Society', is expected to be released early in 2023.

OUR IMPACT

15

Trainings & Presentation Events

505

Number of attendees reached

LEGAL CLINIC

23

Requests for assistance

21

Consultations

10

Clients represented

2

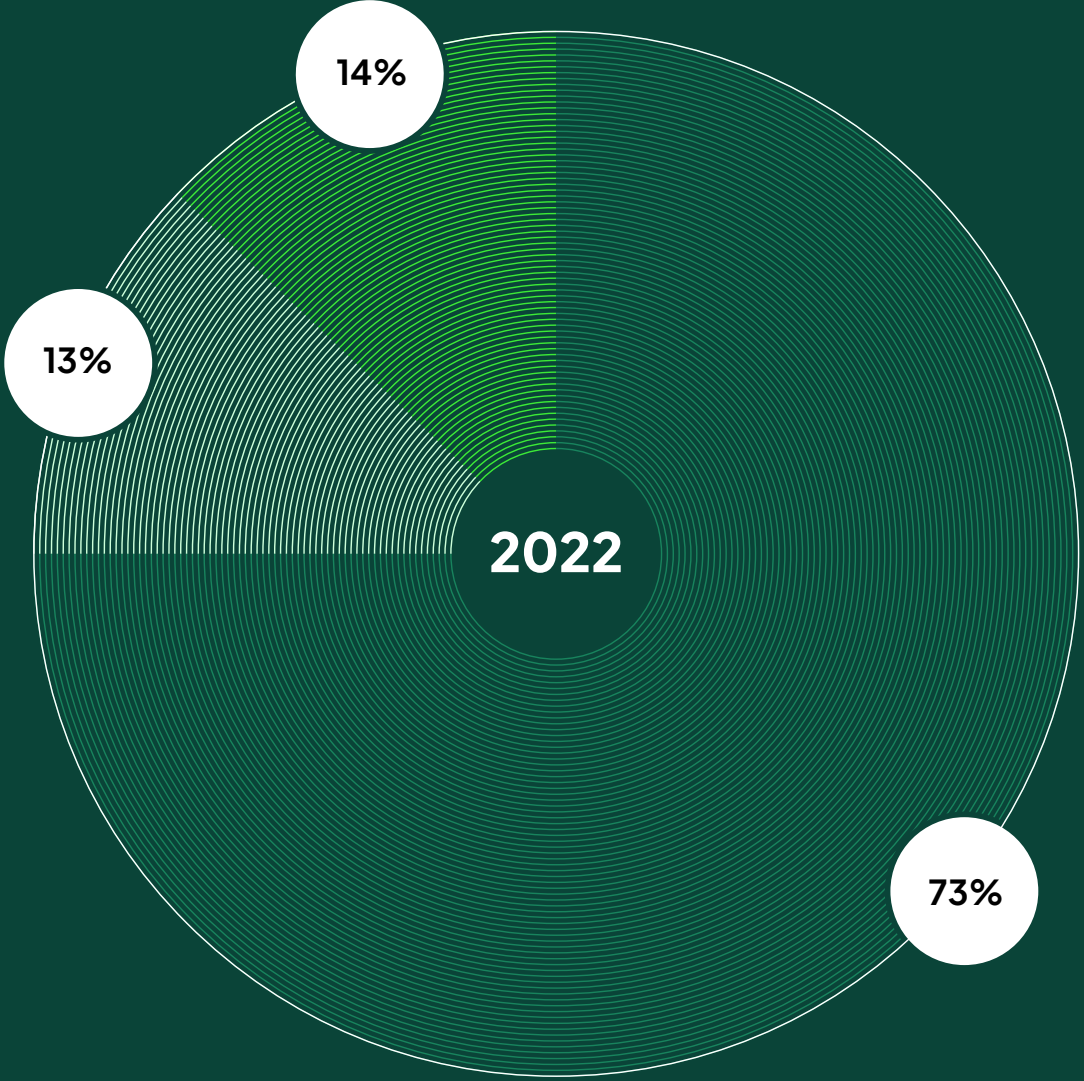
Completed legal audits

8

In process legal audits



FINANCIAL SUMMARY



■ Program Services
 ■ Fundraising Expenses
 ■ Administration & General

INCOME:

Individual Donations/Contributions	\$ 2,561,811.96
Corporate Matching Grants	\$ 17,601.87
In-Kind Service Donations	\$ 361,209.02
Grants	\$ 322,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$3,262,622.85

EXPENSES:

Program Services	\$ 2,508,993.00
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 415,275.00
Admin & General Expenses	\$ 487,361.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,411,629.00

JOIN OUR SUSTAINERS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM:



TO SUPPORT
SCAN
NOW!



Pillar \$1,000/month

You empower and protect American Muslim institutions and organizations against the injustices done in the name of national security.



Mobilizer \$500/month

You defend Muslims facing legal challenges in federal courtrooms.



Catalyst \$350/month

You work to restore justice for innocent American Muslims and their families by providing one hour of legal work.



Advocate \$100/month

You provide legal education to protect yourself and others around you.



Patron \$50/month

You are dedicated to ensuring that the constitution applies to all Americans - including Muslims.



Ally \$25/month

You fight for justice. Every dollar counts.



TO SUPPORT
SCAN NOW!



Recognized by:



mlfa.org