

June 4, 2015

VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL

Carmen Ortiz
U.S. Attorney
One Courthouse Way, Suite 9200
Boston, MA 02210

Vincent B. Lisi
FBI, Special Agent in Charge
One Center Plaza, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02108

William B. Evans
Commissioner, Boston Police Department
One Schroeder Plaza
Boston, MA 02120

Re: Shooting of Usaama Rahim

Dear U.S. Attorney Ortiz, Special Agent Lisi, and Commissioner Evans:

The undersigned organizations write to express our concern about the killing of 26-year old Usaama Rahim Tuesday morning by a Boston police officer and an FBI agent. Given the heightened national awareness of unnecessary police killings of African Americans and the national attention focused on abusive surveillance practices, we believe greater transparency regarding the incident is urgently needed.

First, the video of the shooting should be released to the public immediately. As you know, the police and FBI account of the incident is that Rahim lunged at the law enforcement officers with a knife and that he refused to drop it in response to repeated orders to do so. Yet, certain community leaders who have been permitted to see the video have noted that they could not see well what transpired. Thus, the public needs to have a better understanding of whether lethal force was, in fact, necessary.

Second, law enforcement has not revealed the circumstances surrounding the investigation of Mr. Rahim, the 24-hour surveillance of him, and the basis for the decision to approach him at 7:00 a.m. while he was on his way to work. Rumors have circulated that he was part of a plot to attack a police officer, but no reliable information

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has been provided. In particular, if evidence existed that he was planning such a heinous criminal act, why did the police not possess or seek a warrant to arrest him?

We understand law enforcement concerns that there is an ongoing investigation, but given Special Agent Lisi's statement at Tuesday's press conference that the matter being investigated does not present a continuing threat to public safety, the public deserves to understand why police were spying on and shot Mr. Rahim. This transparency is critical to gaining trust of law enforcement by those who are too often victims of police surveillance and killings.

For these reasons, we urge you to promptly release the video of Mr. Rahim's shooting and make fully available details of the events leading up to the killing of this young man; in particular, why he was subject to constant surveillance and why law enforcement chose to confront him, without an arrest warrant, in the early morning while he was on his way to work and use deadly force against him.

If you have any questions concerning these requests, please contact Glenn Katon, Legal Director with Muslim Advocates, at (415) 675-1495. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Blueford Center For Justice
Arab American Association of New York
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Beantown Society
Black Economic Justice Institute
Black Lives Matter - Boston
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for New Community
ColorOfChange.org
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Muslim Advocates
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (Muslim ARC)
Muslim Justice League
Muslim Wellness Foundation
Muslims Make It Plain
ONYX Organizing Committee
Organization for Black Struggle