

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

Earlier this month, Muslims around the world began the celebration of Ramadan, the 30 day period in which Muslims refrain from eating or drinking from sunrise to sunset. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection and improvement. Through fasting, they experience sacrifice and self-discipline, and heightened empathy for those who are less fortunate. The month of Ramadan is determined by a lunar calendar, and occurs on different dates each year of the Gregorian, or Western, calendar. Fasts will be particularly long this year because Ramadan falls in July, which in North America is when some of the longest days of the year occur.

The fast is broken after sunset at a meal known as Iftar. In many communities in the United States, Iftars have developed into large events at which Muslims invite non-Muslim members of the community to join with them in the evening meal. This year, as in previous years, I and others in this office will be attending several Iftar celebrations in the Eastern District of California. Attendance at these events is consistent with a longer-term effort by U.S. Attorneys generally to increase engagement with Muslim communities in our districts.

U.S. Attorneys' offices have a long history of engaging with a multitude of constituencies and communities. As federal law enforcement officers, we understand the critical importance of building relationships, based on trust, with the communities we serve. Partnerships are vital to address a range of challenges and must have as their foundation a genuine commitment on the part of law enforcement to address community needs and concerns, including protecting rights and public safety. Relationships between some in the Muslim community and federal law enforcement were strained in the years after 9/11, and restoring and rebuilding those ties is an important objective in areas like this one with significant Muslim populations.

Those efforts are particularly relevant now. As the Boston marathon bombings and other events in recent years have made clear, the threat of attacks by persons in this country who have been radicalized to violence is real. Isolation and misunderstanding can render young people more vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. A resilient community that is engaged with its neighbors, its government, and with law enforcement and civic leaders, is best equipped to prevent violent extremism from taking root. Outreach and engagement by the U.S. Attorney's Office undermines the appeal of extremists and helps to empower those communities to resist efforts by others to inject ideologies of intolerance, hatred and violence.

The holy month of Ramadan presents an opportunity to enhance mutual understanding and collaboration with Muslim communities. Others can take advantage of that opportunity, too.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner