

Anti-Muslim incidents up 49 percent in U.S. Harassment, violence, discrimination: Harassment, violence, discrimination

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The largest U.S. Islamic civil rights organization has reported that acts of anti-Muslim discrimination increased by 49 percent last year.

A study by the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations reported that 2004 saw 1,522 incidents of harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment, compared with 1,019 cases in 2003. Anti-Muslim hate crimes increased from 93 cases in 2003 to 141 in 2004. These numbers are the highest the organization has seen since its inception in 1994.

CAIR attributed the boost in complaints to a lingering atmosphere of fear among American Muslims, opinion leaders using anti-Muslim rhetoric and legislation that infringes on civil rights. According to CAIR executive director Nihad Awad, anti-Muslim speech by some religious leaders is widening the gap between the U.S. and the Muslim world.

Complaints involving federal and state agencies decreased from 29 percent of all incidents in 2003 to 19 percent last year. Internet harassment declined from 7 percent to less than 1 percent. Workplace discrimination dropped from 23 percent to 18 percent of the organization's 2004 complaints. *-Religion News Service*