



Council on American-Islamic Relations

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April 4, 2013

Secretary John Kerry
Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20520-0099

Via Fax: (202) 736-4459; (202) 647-8947; (202) 647-3340

SUBJECT: Request to Provide Mr. Nader El-Dajani his Passport

Dear Secretary Kerry:

As Nader El-Dajani's lawyers, it is our unfortunate duty to inform you that the United States Embassy in Bahrain is unlawfully withholding his American passport. Despite his repeated requests, the Embassy has provided Mr. El-Dajani no explanation for the confiscation and for the failure to return it. To maintain his legal status in Bahrain, where Mr. El-Dajani owns a business and keeps a home, he needs his passport by April 15, 2014. Therefore, we're requesting that Embassy officials return his passport immediately, at once and without delay, and that the conduct of those responsible be investigated.

On February 27, 2014, Mr. El-Dajani, a naturalized American citizen, submitted his passport in person to the U.S. Embassy in Bahrain in order to obtain a new one. At the time he applied, the pages in his unexpired passport were almost full. Having previously added pages to his passport, and anticipating a good deal of further international travel in the near future, he needed a new passport which would have an adequate number of blank pages.

After he gave his passport to an Embassy official, the official informed Mr. El-Dajani that "guidance from Washington" directed the Embassy to withhold his passport. Nevertheless, Mr. El-Dajani sought its return so he could attend the 30th anniversary celebration of his marriage, but the Embassy official denied his request. To date, Mr. El-Dajani has received neither an explanation as to why the Embassy confiscated his passport in the first place nor any information as to when he might expect to get it back.

Without an American passport, Mr. El-Dajani will not only lose his legal status in Bahrain where his company is headquartered. He will also be unable to return to the United States to be with his wife and children, to travel internationally for work, and to visit relatives who live throughout the Middle East.

As we're sure you agree, it is simply unconscionable for the United States to treat a citizen this way. Moreover, we believe the Embassy's actions are unlawful under the circumstances. Having a passport abroad is an absolute necessity. Without one, an American citizen's fundamental rights -- to travel and to return to one's homeland -- disappears. Indeed, because Mr. El-Dajani, a law-abiding citizen, has not been accused of or charged with having committed a crime, there is no basis whatever for the United States to deprive him of his passport and then to refuse to give it back.

Therefore, please confirm that Mr. El-Dajani's passport has been returned to him forthwith, or that a new one has been issued, and please keep us informed of your investigation into this matter.

We are available to discuss this should you wish to.

Sincerely,

_____/s/_____

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_____/s/_____

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cc: Ambassador Thomas C. Krajeski