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For Immediate Release

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The Muslim Bar Association of New York is troubled by findings in the July 9, 2014 report by Glenn Greenwald and Murtaza Hussain's titled "Meet the Muslim-American Leaders the FBI and NSA Have Been Spying On" (the "Report"). Among the at least five Muslim Americans who were the targets of surveillance are two fellow members of the legal profession, Faisal Gill and Asim Ghafoor.

In order to obtain a warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the Justice Department must convince a judge with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court that probable cause exists to establish that the targets are or may be involved with international terrorist organizations, aiding and abetting espionage, sabotage or terrorism. By all accounts, these five individuals have had no such involvement and in fact have lived exemplary lives – serving as leaders in the Muslim community and contributing members of American society.

We are especially concerned with how warrants for surveillance are being issued in practice and why this practice is targeting leaders in the American Muslim community when, from the facts at hand, the burden of proof for obtaining such warrants has not been met. While it is unknown for certain why these individuals were monitored, we fear that they were targeted in large part because of their religious identity and their protected First Amendment activities.

The Muslim Bar Association of New York will continue to follow these developments in the coming weeks and months as more facts come to light. On July 9, 2014, we joined a coalition of human rights, privacy rights and faith-based organizations in a letter to President Obama expressing our concerns and demanding that more information be made publicly available to assess the findings in the Report. A copy of the letter can be found at:

aclu.org/sites/default/files/assets/coalition_letter_re_intercept_nsa_revelations_o.pdf.