



### Republican Anti-Muslim Bigotry is Blocking a Muslim Judicial Nominee

Back in January, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee had advanced lawyer Adeel Mangi's potential historic nomination. The Biden administration nominated Mangi to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, where he would become the first Muslim-American federal appellate judge if he is confirmed. This week, the White House, alongside several allied law enforcement and labor groups, emphasized its support for the judicial nominee who has faced Islamophobic attacks from some Republican lawmakers in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Republican chairs in the Senate Judiciary Committee bombarded Mangi with irrelevant and combative questions related to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Israel-Hamas War, the October 7th Hamas attacks, and policy issues related to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine. Mangi was even asked if he celebrated the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The questions posed to Mangi were insinuating that he would be supportive of acts of terror due to his religious faith. Mangi was forced to repeatedly condemn antisemitism and terrorism, despite being asked similar questions already. The Republican lawmakers' line of questioning was Islamophobic in nature, and was denounced by many entities including the Biden administration, CAIR, and AFL-CIO. Additionally, an array of prominent Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Committee, the National Council for Jewish Women, the Anti-Defamation League, and others had previously voiced their support for Mangi's nomination as well. The groups have highlighted that nominees should be evaluated based on their intellectual and legal abilities, and not based on their religious beliefs. White House Deputy Press Secretary Andrew Bates remarked that "the White House stands 100 percent behind Mr. Mangi" and urged the U.S. Senate to "swiftly confirm him."

Mangi is a highly-qualified candidate for the position, known for protecting religious rights in the private sector as a partner at the Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP law firm. He also served as an advisory board member at Rutgers University's Center for Security, Race, and Rights for four years. The Senate Judiciary Republicans had also accused the Rutgers Center of platforming terrorist sympathizers, using Mangi's affiliation as supposed justification for their questioning and opposition. Among the Republican Senators who subjected Mangi to harsh questioning were Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, and Josh Hawley. Rights and civil liberties advocates lament the fact that these are individuals in positions of power who are making bigoted insinuations about groups of people whom they undoubtedly represent in their home states. These are supposed to be leaders who set a good example to the public, and hold sway over public opinion. Thus, it does not send a good message to the public when elected officials link being Muslim to supporting terrorist activities and being antisemitic, behavior that is blatantly Islamophobic and discriminatory. Coming to judicial nominee Mangi's aid during the inflammatory questioning were Senators Dick Durbin and Corey Booker, who both rebuked the aforementioned Senate Judiciary Republicans, with Durbin stating that they have "reached a new low."

As pointed out in an editorial board from a newspaper in Mangi's home state of New Jersey, what should have been a historic and joyous moment for him turned into an "ugly spectacle." Instead of asking about Mangi's impressive qualifications or some of his landmark cases, the three Senate Judiciary Republicans relentlessly interrupted and peppered him with suggestive questions unrelated to his professional expertise or qualifications as a federal appellate judge nominee. One can only hope that an individual like Mangi – someone who has admirably

dedicated his career to advocating for religious freedom and tolerance on behalf of those of all faiths – will ultimately be confirmed by the U.S. Senate in what would be poetic justice in the face of some of the bigotry that he himself was forced to endure during the process.