

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Activist Zuhair Mahd to Be Sworn in Tuesday after Long Immigration Battle *Victory Points to Gains and Remaining Challenges in U.S. Name Check Policy*

What, Who:

On Tuesday March 31, 2009, long-time immigrant rights activist Zuhair Mahd will finally receive his American citizenship at a public swearing-in ceremony at the headquarters of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in Denver, Colorado. Zuhair Mahd—a blind information technologies specialist from Jordan whose citizenship application was delayed for more than five years as a result of the FBI's National Name Check Program (NNCP)—has become a leader in calling for an end to the U.S. government's use of racial and ethnic profiling in its immigration processing since September 11, 2001.

Like many other Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, or South Asian applicants, Mr. Mahd's application was delayed by the FBI's name check process. Despite a ruling from a federal district court judge ordering the FBI and Department of Homeland Security to rule on his application within 90 days, Mr. Mahd's case remained pending until March 2009, when the Denver District Director of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services finally announced that he would be sworn in as a citizen.

Mr. Mahd is also a central figure in the forthcoming documentary, *Americans on Hold*, made by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHR&GJ) at NYU School of Law, which will chronicle the human rights impacts of racial and ethnic profiling in U.S. immigration processes. As the documentary shows, his naturalization ceremony is the culmination of a long and arduous struggle to attain U.S. citizenship.

Mr. Mahd's naturalization marks a victory for immigrant rights activists around the country. It has also prompted the CHR&GJ to renew its call to the Obama administration to do away with the use of racial and ethnic profiling in U.S. immigration processes. The Center will be releasing a series of recommendations to the administration on Tuesday in a press release at the time of the ceremony.

When:

Tuesday March 31st, 2009
10:00 A.M. (Mountain Time Zone)

Where:

New USCIS Headquarters
12484E. Weaver Place, Centennial, Colorado

CEREMONY IS OPEN TO THE PRESS

About the CHRGI:

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice was established in 2002 to stimulate cutting edge scholarship and to make original and constructive contributions to on-going policy debates in the field of human rights. Since its inception, the Center has played a critical role in identifying, denouncing, and fighting human rights abuses in U.S. counter-terrorism policies.

Philip Alston is the Center's Faculty Chair; Smita Narula and Margaret Satterthwaite are its Faculty Directors; Jayne Huckerby is Research Director; Amna Akbar is Clinical Fellow; Lama Fakih is Center Fellow; and Veerle Oopenhaffen is Program Director.

For more information about our work, please visit the CHRGI's website at: www.chrgj.org

For more information on the Center's work related to citizenship delays please visit:
<http://chrgj.org/projects/profiling.html>

For more about racial profiling and disenfranchisement in the 2008 elections please visit:
<http://www.chrgj.org/press/docs/oct08electionpressrelease.pdf>

For more information about the Americans on Hold Documentary or to view footage of Mr. Mahd, please visit: <http://www.chrgj.org/projects/documentary.html>

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