



**American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee**  
1732 Wisconsin Ave., NW | Washington, DC 20007 | [www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)  
Tel: 202-244-2990 | Fax: 202-244-7968 | Email: [adc@adc.org](mailto:adc@adc.org)

## Statement by Lieutenant Colonel Lance Koury at the ADC Press Conference announcing the Release of a New Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination:

December 4, 2008

Good Morning,

My name is Lance B. Koury. I am a Lieutenant Colonel within the Alabama National Guard and I am also a Federal government employee within the Alabama National Guard organization.

The matter for which I am speaking involves: discriminatory statements, behavior and prejudicial actions performed either directly by...or with knowledge and acceptance by senior leaders within the National Guard organization.

I have directly witnessed and have provided names of corroborative witnesses concerning untoward behavior and discriminatory language used against various minorities and especially Arabs and Muslims.

My initial *Verbal*...complaints to the chain of command within the Alabama National Guard were ignored and dismissed as inconsequential.

It was this dismissive attitude that prompted me, beginning in 2007, to make an formal written complaint.

As I have already mentioned, I am a full time civilian Federal Employee working within the Alabama National Guard.

As part of my job requirement I am also an active member of the Army National Guard... where I serve as a Helicopter pilot and have qualifications as an instructor pilot.

Because of the interconnected relationship and the multiple chains of command that I either... serve or report to... I wrote letters to both my Guard components and elements of the Active Duty chain that included the Secretary of the Army.

In regards to the discrimination that I witnessed ...I informed much of the Army hierarchy... to include: the Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard, the Honorable Secretary of the Army, and the Chief of National Guard Bureau.

In August 2007 I formalized my complaint with a letter addressed to the Army Secretary.

The following paragraphs are from that letter and they might help you understand my intentions both then and today, especially if you realize that...there has never been a response to that letter.

“Dear Mr Secretary:



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Now is *not the time* to introduce doubts concerning the professionalism, dedication and general demeanor of the Reserve and National Guard programs.

From the inception of our country... when citizens were called upon to join a force against tyranny and continuing through all the great conflicts that followed ...ordinary citizens have contributed to the cause of their times in order to ensure the way of life they believed in would be preserved for those who followed.

My father was one such individual. He was also a part of the “greatest generation” who was willing to sacrifice everything for this country and what it represented. Even though that generation **could not** have known what September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 would bring... they understood that the burden they overcame would allow subsequent generations to overcome their own challenges.

As a 17 year old, my father served in WWII and he continued his military service through the Korean Conflict in the Air Force, and through two tours in Vietnam as an Army Warrant Officer. He and his brother, my uncle... Commodore George Koury, are decorated veterans.

My brother... Ensign Mark E. Koury was killed in a Navy Aviation training accident in 1976, and another brother Chris Koury retired as a Navy Captain in 2005.

I do not mention my family’s contributions in order to establish a pedigree... instead I only want to inform you of their contributions as a baseline for understanding the dedication that this Nation *inspires* in its citizens.

In the case of my family and in the context of why I have chosen to write this letter I want you to know that my father and uncle were first generation Americans... borne of Lebanese immigrants who settled in Brooklyn N.Y.

We are a family of proud *Americans* , who happen to be Christians and who also believe that we are all... “created equal”.

I will not suffer in silence for: a **Nation**, a **State** or an **Organization** that believes or acts otherwise.

I hope you can understand when I state that... I am compelled, to bring to your attention these unfortunate expressions of prejudice and intolerance emanating from within the Army National Guard.

Unfortunately these sentiments are occurring at **senior** levels of leadership within that organization.

I want this letter to serve as notice of such behavior just in case a separate cause of action involving such behavior is ignored or minimized.

The intolerance that I have come to observe involves general disrespect involving minorities within the Guard and vocalized prejudice and hatred against Muslims and Arabs. This issue extends beyond the National Guard or the National Guard Technician Program.

Throughout our history the U.S Army has always been the leader and standard bearer for race relations within the Department of Defense.



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Their efforts toward integration and assimilation helped shape our country. The Army, as supported by Executive Order 9981(1947) gave impetus to the “created equal clause” of the Constitution and ensured the integration of the Army.

This was followed by integration and acceptance within and on: our baseball fields, our school systems and ultimately our society in general.

Our military is not “separate but equal” but is actually a microcosm of our Nation. The beliefs and value system of our military must reflect the same beliefs found throughout our Nation.

Intolerance and prejudice are incompatible with the notion, as Spoken by President Bush, that “given a choice... men will choose freedom over tyranny and peace over war”.

Accepting this axiom is necessary for us to win the battle against the opposing beliefs that exist throughout the Middle East.

My enclosure [**the contents of which I can share with you if desired**]... introduces the issue of intolerance and openly declared hatred towards Arabs and Muslims and ignorance toward other groups by a Brigade Commander within the Alabama National Guard.

This particular Colonel commands a Provisional Aviation Brigade of greater than 600 troops.

It is understood that one of our secondary missions and perhaps the most difficult challenge... is to provide security and aid to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan where the overwhelming majority of their population is Muslim.

I then ended that letter to the Secretary by stating the following:

“...we can ill afford an attitude of *intolerance* when the basis for the **War** involving terrorism is in fact... *intolerance*.”

Rather than have my lone voice protesting such behavior I elicited the help from the ADC. I wrote to the Honorable Mary Rose Oakar the following:

“It is my hope that with the strength of your organization that you can assist me in bringing this discriminatory and intolerable behavior to rapid closure. It is disturbing when these individuals, many of whom fought in Afghanistan and Iraq to assist those countries in their pursuit of freedom, are the same individuals who so willfully express their hatred of Arabs and Muslims. Their behavior defiles the service of the approximately 4,000 Muslims currently in the military and the tens of thousands of Arab-Americans who have proudly worn the uniform of the U.S. Armed Services. When a senior staff officer is allowed to openly make statements, such as *‘I hate all Muslims, their main objective is not to convert Christians, but to kill them’*, it only reinforces the belief of those bigoted individuals that Muslims and Arab-Americans are second class citizens”

The result of that letter has been substantial and without that support I believe I would have been simply another silenced or ignored casualty of attempted reform.



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I want to publicly thank those very freedom- loving members of this fine organization...Thank you ADC.

As an update I want you to know that thus far, I have received no written response from either: my civilian, Army Guard, or Regular Army chain of command concerning these discrimination and defamation allegations.

To the best of my knowledge there are no investigations concerned specifically with the discriminatory comments made by the Colonel in my complaint.

It is my continued *belief* that this matter will languish and nothing will be done to correct such illicit discriminatory behavior against Arabs and Muslims due to the political nature of such accusations.

One thought for your consideration is that the Guard Bureau, upon understanding the defamation part of my complaint simply identified it as an EEOC issue without referral.

This is significant in that it would have been both proper and easy for such a referral to initiate an investigation.

Instead of taking appropriate action, they instead demonstrated their complacency regarding these matters by choosing **to do nothing**.

Finally and sadly I must tell you that Subsequent to the voicing of my concerns and the pursuit of the formal complaint...I was *reprised* by having to perform 'special requirements' within my job and generally ...my workplace turned into a "*very hostile work environment*."

I can take questions... however since some of my complaints also involve personnel actions and reprisals against me... and are considered ongoing investigations or are allegedly awaiting adjudication... I will have to be fairly general in my responses.

Thank You.