

# Immigrations and Customs Enforcement official relieved of duties

HELENA — A top Immigrations and Customs Enforcement official who sent an Islamophobic email to a Helena immigration attorney has been relieved of his supervisory duties, according to lawyers involved in the case.

Earlier this month, Bruce Norum, the supervisory detention and deportation officer for the Helena Department of Homeland Security ICE field office, forwarded a racially charged email to Shahid Haque-Hausrath, a Helena immigration attorney of Pakistani descent.

Haque-Hausrath, a natural-born U.S. citizen who was raised in a Muslim household, took offense to the email and filed official complaints with DHS and the U. S. Department of Justice. Haque-Hausrath's complaint maintained that it is unacceptable for a top-ranking ICE official with authority over immigrants of all races, nationalities and religious backgrounds to send such a racially charged email to anyone, especially from a work computer and during work hours.

On Wednesday, Haque-Hausrath said he was contacted by Steven Branch, Norum's supervisor in Salt Lake City, who said

Norum is no longer serving as the supervisory detention and deportation officer for the Montana office.

According to Haque-Hausrath, Branch, the director for ICE's Salt Lake City field office, contacted Haque-Hausrath's attorney last Friday to let him know that his office had received the complaint and was taking it seriously.

"He said he was taking swift action to make sure the credibility of his office wasn't called into question, and to make sure I was able to continue to perform my duties without bias or retaliation," Haque-Hausrath said. "He said he wanted to run a clean operation, and he understood that Bruce Norum's actions compromised the integrity of that operation."

ICE officials declined to comment on whether Norum's status as supervisory detention and deportation officer had changed. ICE officials in Helena, Boise and Salt Lake City all referred calls to public information officer Carl Rusnok in the

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Dallas field office. Rusnok was not able to provide any specific details on Wednesday.

"We want to make sure we're not violating anybody's privacy, especially when we're talking about an individual law enforcement officer," Rusnok said.

Haque-Hausrath said he also was contacted Wednesday by a special agent with the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility. Haque-Hausrath said he is scheduled to meet with investigators next week to discuss Norum's email.

"An investigation into Mr. Norum's misconduct is going forward, and I am cooperating fully with that investigation," Haque-Hausrath said.

According to Haque-Hausrath, Branch told him on Friday that Norum had been replaced, at least on a temporary basis, by longtime ICE officer Stewart Carlson.

"Officer Carlson has been a deportation officer who worked under Mr. Norum for many years. I have a good working relationship with Mr. Carlson, and I was pleased to hear he would assume the role as acting (supervisory detention and deportation officer)," Haque-Hausrath said.

Carlson also declined to comment, forwarding all questions to Rusnok.

Shortly after the Tribune reported on Norum's email Sunday, the Washington, D. C.-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, issued a press release

demanding ICE take swift disciplinary action against Norum.

CAIR also called for a review of ICE training on issues related to Islam and the American Muslim community.

"This incident is yet another example of why our nation's security and counterterrorism agencies need to completely review and reform training and educational materials dealing with any issue related to Islam or American Muslims," said CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper. "The fact that such a senior official would re-distribute materials questioning the loyalty of American Muslims is evidence of an internal breakdown in training and suggests that an atmosphere of intolerance may be present in the agency."

On Wednesday, Hooper said he welcomed the news that Norum has been relieved of his supervisory duties.

"I think it shows that ICE is taking this incident seriously, and we'll just have to

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wait for the ultimate outcome to make a final judgment," Hooper said. "Obviously we welcome this initial action, and we hope that further steps are taken."

Haque-Hausrath said if the investigation finds that Norum intentionally sent the inflammatory email to someone, regardless of whether he intended for Haque-Hausrath to be a recipient, then Norum should be terminated.

"My only hope is that an investigation is conducted fairly and that at the conclusion of the investigation, if Mr. Norum is found to have deliberately sent that message, then he should be terminated, and he should never serve in a supervisory capacity ever again," Haque-Hausrath said.

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