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Muslim Community Network  
Connecting Communities, Creating New Spaces for Engagement

# Litigating RLUIPA Claims: *Al Falah Center v. Bridgewater Township* A Case Study

Muslim communities around the country have faced particular challenges and opposition in their efforts to establish places to pray. While some communities have faced only vocal opposition, others have faced legal barriers imposed by local governments that deny necessary permits or amend their land use and zoning regulations in an effort to prevent the establishment of mosques in their communities. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) offers a potential avenue of relief, as it bars governments from imposing or implementing any land use regulation in a manner that treats a religious assembly or institution on less than equal terms with a nonreligious assembly or institution, or that unreasonably limits religious assemblies, institutions, or structures within a jurisdiction. RLUIPA was enacted to protect houses of worship from discrimination and undue interference with religious exercise through application of zoning and land use laws, thereby solidifying the basic constitutional protections provided under the Free Exercise Clause, the Free Speech Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Al Falah Center in Bridgewater, NJ recently resolved litigation involving RLUIPA and other claims against the Township of Bridgewater, based on the Township's response to Al Falah Center's application to develop a mosque. The case provides an opportunity to discuss RLUIPA's importance in safeguarding basic constitutional protections and the challenges that religious communities face in such cases.

Come join our panel for an engaging discussion of how communities seeking relief from the courts under RLUIPA raise critical questions on the meaning of religious freedom today, the protection of minority religions, and the role of the courts in that dialogue.

## **Moderator:**

- Omar Mohammedi, Esq., *President, Association of Muslim American Lawyers*

## **Panelists:**

- Peter L. Zimroth, Esq., *Arnold & Porter LLP, Litigation Counsel to Al Falah Center*
- Eric W. Treene, Esq., *Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division*
- Lloyd Tubman, Esq., *Archer & Greiner, P.C., Land Use Counsel to Al Falah Center*
- Debbie Almontaser, *Muslim Community Network*

Thursday, April 2, 2015  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The event will be held at:  
[Arnold & Porter LLP](#)  
399 Park Avenue (between 53rd and 54th Streets)  
New York, NY 10022-4690

Click [here](#) to RSVP to the program.

Click [here](#) to decline.

CLE credit pending.

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