

Tuesday Evening, March 12, 2019



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

**MRFF DEMANDS FORT CARSON'S
ORDER TO REMOVE HIJAB
NOT GO UNPUNISHED!**

**COMMAND SGT. MAJOR WHO FORCED
SOLDIER OF MUSLIM FAITH
TO REMOVE HIJAB
MUST HAVE X-RAY VISION**

"Unless this CSM, who wretchedly denigrated our MRFF client by ordering her to take off her hijab in public, enjoys the extraordinary powers of X-ray vision, it would have been impossible for this CSM to have even seen the hair of our MRFF client,"

—Mikey Weinstein

[Click to Read Mikey's Full Statement](#)

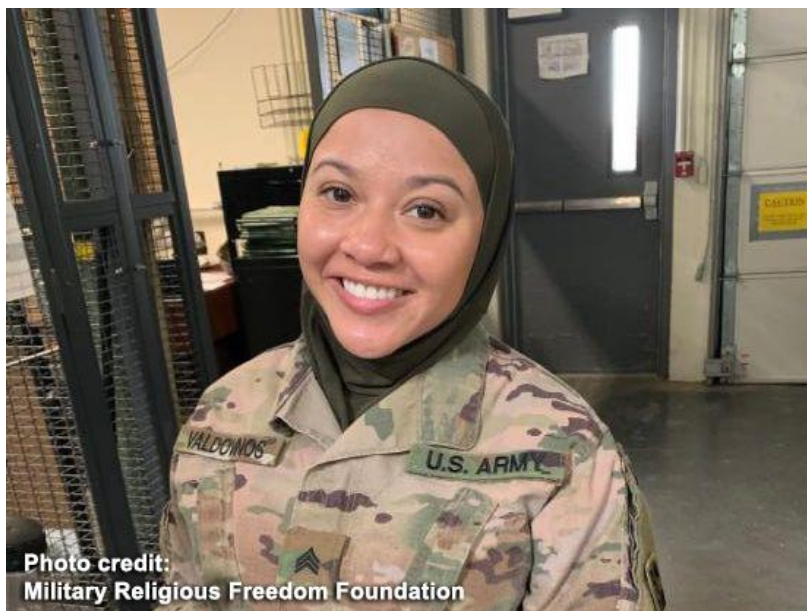


Photo credit:
Military Religious Freedom Foundation

MRFF Client, Sergeant Cesilia Valdovinos,
U.S. Army, Member of the Muslim Faith

MRFF represents slightly over 18%
of all Muslim Americans in the U.S. military.

**COLORADO SPRINGS INDEPENDENT
COVERS MRFF**

Excerpt from article:

"With MRFF involved, run by the high-profile and vociferous Mikey Weinstein, the issue might not die soon, despite Fort Carson officials disputing Valdovinos' account of what happened that day."

**Order to remove hijab at Fort Carson
spurs controversy but versions of story differ**

By: Pam Zubeck

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

(Excerpts from CSIndy/Emphasis added by MRFF)

It was about 3 p.m. on March 6, and Sgt. Cesilia Valdovinos' unit was receiving training in suicide prevention at the chapel on Fort Carson. Without warning, Valdovinos tells the *Independent*, Command Sergeant Major Kerstin Montoya grabbed her arm and said, "You come with me."

Valdovinos followed her to the back of the chapel, where she says Montoya

told her to remove “that.” The object at issue was Valdovinos’ hijab, a head scarf worn by Muslim women, for which she had obtained an accommodation letter last year.

Valdovinos did as she was told, but later contacted a member of the Pentagon’s chaplaincy, a colonel who’s Muslim. He told her she shouldn’t have obliged by removing the hijab, and referred her to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

With MRFF involved, run by the high-profile and vociferous Mikey Weinstein, the issue might not die soon, despite Fort Carson officials disputing Valdovinos’ account of what happened that day.

[...]

MRFF founder Weinstein argues that since Valdovinos had secured a letter of accommodation from her commander, demanding she remove the hijab is a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and Army regulations. (Carson didn’t respond to this allegation when asked by the *Indy*.)

“This woman has been spiritually raped,” he says. “This rips asunder good order, morale, discipline and unit cohesion.” It also serves up a “public relations bonanza for our Islamic extremist enemies” who wish to paint the war on terror as a war on Islam or a clash of world religions, he claims.

Weinstein commended Valdovinos for coming forward, noting she’s a woman of color — her father is Mexican and her mother, Navajo — and is Muslim. **“It took a tremendous amount of courage for her to stand up for herself,”** Weinstein says.

[...]

Weinstein vows to file a complaint with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, as well as seek “just punishment of the Army perpetrators.”

[...]

[Click to Read Full Article on CSIndy](#)

ARMY TIMES COVERS MRFF ON HOMEPAGE

A Muslim soldier says her command sergeant major forced her to remove her hijab

By: Meghann Myers

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

(Excerpts from ArmyTimes/Emphasis added by MRFF)

Sgt. Cesilia Valdovinos was at a chapel at Fort Carson, Colorado, for a suicide prevention briefing on March 6 when she says her command sergeant major grabbed her by the arm, took her outside and made her remove her religious head covering in front of others.

The senior noncommissioned officer believed that Valdovinos, 26, who has an approved exemption from her brigade commander to wear a hijab in uniform, was wearing her hair out of regulations underneath it, she told Army Times on Tuesday.

[...]

The inspection was a blatant act of Islamophobia, according to the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which represents Valdovinos.

“Unless this CSM, who wretchedly denigrated our MRFF client by ordering her to take off her hijab in public, enjoys the extraordinary powers of X-ray vision, it would have been impossible for this CSM to have even seen the hair of our MRFF client,” Mikey Weinstein said in a statement.

[...]

“No actions have been taken at this time pending the results from the informal inquiry,” Brandy Gill told Army Times. “Once all of the facts have been gathered the command will take appropriate action.”

[...]

[Click to Read Full Article on ArmyTimes](#)

Original Statement from MRFF Client Sergeant Cesilia Valdovinos

Thursday, March 7, 2019

From: Cesilia Valdovinos
Date: March 7, 2019 at 12:48:20 PM MST
To: Mikey Weinstein
Subject: SGT Valdovinos

Hello, my name is Cesilia Diana Valdovinos I am currently serving active duty here at Fort Carson, Colorado. I am 26 years old, my father is Mexican and my mother is Native American (Navajo). I am from Lodi, Ca. I graduated high school in Douglasville, Ga. Growing up my father raised my brothers and I in St Anne’s Catholic Church out in Lodi, Ca. In 2016 I found interest in Islam, I had a friend in El Paso who is Muslim. One of my good friends who was a roommate also converted to Islam. I lost sight of the catholic side with so many political issues. For a brief moment before Islam saved me I was without a religion. I was depressed, I was constantly crying and I was lost.

Islam is peaceful, Islam is forgiving, Islam is me. I feel it fits me incredibly because I have a beautiful connection with Allah and am at peace with who I am and become following Islam.

My basic training was in Fort Jackson, SC. Attended AIT at Fort Lee, VA. My first duty station was Fort Knox, KY. 2013 where I deployed for the first time to Fob Apache RC-East for 6 month. Ended early due to the Units deactivation. Upon my arrival back to Fort Knox, I changed stations to Fort Bliss in JUNE 2014. In December 2014 2-501st CAB deployed on a humanitarian mission to Monrovia, Africa. We were there for a short 4 months before arriving back to Fort Bliss. In January 2018 I changed stations to my current station here at Fort Carson Colorado. I deployed with 704th BSB FSC in March 2018 during this deployment I was called a terrorist by a soldier on our way headed to the range. I informed CPT Arias the FSC commander of the incident and his statement was “no way” but no actions followed.

During this deployment I was Approved for my religious accommodation memo to wear Hijab.

Returned back from deployment in Nov 2018, a month after my arrival from deployment I was sent to the dining facility here at Fort Carson (War fighter) to work my MOS 92G culinary arts specialist. During my short months at the dining facility, SFC Bryant a Caucasian female had an issue with my religious preferences of not handle pork or being in the back of the kitchen while pork was being cooked. The smell that the pork would give off while being cooked would turn my stomach, make me nauseous, and give me bad headache. The 704th plan of actions was to take me out and have me work at the company. My home company is HHC, I was place in A Co. In this company I have been referred to as the “girl with the hood” because I wear hijab, by the company’s 1SG LAKE.

Wednesday March 6, 2019 at or about 1456

CSM Montoya pulled my arm and said “you come with me” 704th BSB was at the soldier memorial chapel here on Fort Carson, Colorado. We went to the back of the Chapel where other soldiers were present, CSM Montoya had CPT Smith (s1 OIC) presents with her. CSM Montoya told me to remove “that” and pointed at my hijab. I SGT Valdovinos, looked at her in confusion and asked her if she was referring to my hijab. She said yes. I proceeded to ask her if she was allowed to make me take my hijab off she said “I can”. I was hesitant to take off my hijab but didn’t want to get into trouble for disrespect so I proceeded to take it off partially. She than stated “no all the way off” I took off my under cap and she said turn around. I hurried to put my under cap back on and fixed my hijab. She said “mmhmm, and to get out of here”.

At this point I felt embarrassed and religiously raped in a sense. My religious preference is only to unveil in front of my husband in the comfort of my own

home. I feel violated, abused, and degraded of my religious beliefs. In a sense I felt like my work place did not care about my religious beliefs. I walked back in the doors of the chapel to head to my seat but had tears running down my face to I went right back out the main doors of the chapel wiped my face and went to my seat.

There is a witness that was present when CSM Montoya grabbed my arm to call me to the back of the chapel. CSM Montoya is from the European decent, strong accent, I'm not aware of her religion. As a female CSM and even 1SG its degrading and upsetting. I felt we should have more unity as females in the military regardless of rank.

Sir, I am coming to you because I no longer feel I can entrust my issues with anyone in the military, the issues I have brought forward have been brushed off. I now sit in a company that refers to me as the "girl with the hood" I am no longer comfortable standing in the ranks for those who are suppose to be peers and subordinates. I dread coming to the company after this issue, I do not feel I should have let the comment of being called a terrorist go but I did. That was my mistake but I can't carry on any longer wanting to hide in the restroom and cry or call my husband as an outlet. I should feel comfortable and able to be myself in my workplace.

**Response from Brandy Gill, U.S. Army, Fort Carson
Garrison Public Affairs, Chief, Media Relations,
Installation Management Command**

Friday, March 8, 2019

From: Gill, Brandy S CIV USARMY USAG (US)
Sent: 3/8/2019 3:24:55 PM
To: Pam Zubeck
Subject: Fort Carson statement regarding Sgt. Valdovinos

Fort Carson leadership respects and honors every Soldiers' right to practice their faith openly and without fear of prejudice or repercussion. When possible, leaders allow religious accommodations to Soldiers so they may conform to their chosen religion's mandatory rules of appearance while continuing to serve in uniform. However, even when accommodations are allowed, Soldiers are still required to meet and maintain standards of appearance in accordance with Army Regulation 670-1.

According to Army Directive 2017-13, the wear of a hijab by female Soldiers must meet certain specifications. The scarf must be worn close to the hair and jaw lines so as not to cover any part of the face, the ends have to be tucked into the uniform top, and it must be free of designs or markings unless it has a camouflage pattern that matches the Army Combat Uniform. This guidance doesn't override or negate the standards of appearance as stated in AR 670-1, specifically in chapter three which describes authorized male and female hair styles and appearance.

According to sources who were present, Sgt. Valdovinos' hair was visibly out of regulation. Her senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) and a battalion staff officer, both female, stepped outside with Sgt. Valdovinos so they could speak to her privately. At no time did the senior non-commissioned officer touch Sgt. Valdovinos. The senior NCO did ask the Soldier to remove her hijab in order to verify whether or not her hair was within regulation. Upon removing the hijab, the Soldier's leadership discovered that Sgt. Valdovinos' hair was completely down, which is not allowed while in uniform. The senior NCO told Sgt. Valdovinos to put her hair back in regulation and to not let it happen again. The Soldier was never told she could not wear the hijab. No other Soldiers, besides the three females, were present when this verbal counseling took place.

V/r,

Brandy Gill
Garrison Public Affairs
Chief, Media Relations
Installation Management Command

**MRFF's Founder & President Mikey Weinstein
Responds to U.S. Army, Fort Carson's
"Salacious Lies"**

Saturday, March 9, 2019

Fort Carson is simply, shamefully and dishonestly falsely-reporting about this shocking incident of BLATANT Islamophobic bigotry perpetrated by one of its highest ranking NCO's on the installation. Their mendacious and twisted "version" of what transpired is an absolutely repulsive exacerbation of an already horrific incident of racist anti-Muslim prejudice.

Fort Carson's lies start at the very beginning of this disgraceful incident. Fort Carson is refusing to admit that the abusive female Command Sergeant Major (CSM) physically grabbed our MRFF client in public and yanked her away to further effectuate her "ordering" of our MRFF client to immediately and publicly take off her hijab. MRFF has an eyewitness to this horror. There is NO doubt that it happened. It is all just breathtakingly dishonest and disgusting. Further, our MRFF client is more than willing to submit to a polygraph test to validate her claims. MRFF wonders if the abusive CSM would likewise agree to such a polygraph test? MRFF will gladly pay for both lie detector procedures.

Unless this CSM, who wretchedly denigrated our MRFF client by ordering her to take off her hijab in public, enjoys the extraordinary powers of X-Ray vision, it would have been IMPOSSIBLE for this CSM to have even SEEN the hair of our MRFF client. Indeed, even if this CSM DID have X-Ray vision, our client's hair was neatly tucked beneath her under-cap, completely in accord with Army appearance regulations. This under-cap is part and parcel of her prior Army-approved hijab garments. These hijab garments were fully approved for our MRFF client approximately 9 months ago by her current Brigade Commander..

These salacious lies from Fort Carson must NOT go unpunished. Our MRFF client has filed a formal EEO Complaint. That EEO Complaint MUST be resolved swiftly and in complete accordance with justice. If that does not happen, MRFF plans, among a number of other specific courses of action seeking remediation for our client and just punishment of the Army perpetrators, to file a full and aggressive complaint on behalf of our client with the United States Civil Rights Commission in Washington D.C.

Michael L. "Mikey" Weinstein, Esq.
Founder and President
Military Religious Freedom Foundation

**Sergeant Cesilia Valdovinos
Responds to
U.S. Army, Fort Carson's Statement**

Friday, March 8, 2019

From: Cesilia Valdovinos
Date: March 8, 2019 at 4:16:16 PM MST
To: Michael L Weinstein
Subject: Re: Fort Carson statement regarding Sgt. Valdovinos and Her reply To MRFF

Sir I read the response and this sir is exactly why I can NOT confine in anyone in the military on no levels. The part of her touching me is a lie she indeed did grab my arm, I have a witness for that in the group that I was sitting with in the chapel. This is exactly why I am coming to Military Religious Freedom Foundation because if I would have gone through this alone sir I would not stand a chance it's I goldfish in a pond with paranoias attacking me when I'm simply getting justice for what I strongly believe it. It makes me furious that because of rank in the military the lowest one will never get to make a statement.

I wear my hijab, my hijab consist of two part. My under cap which is tightest and closest to my face, and my scarf which fits a little more loosely. My under cap sir is in a sense a tube like garment open ends on both sides. I wrap my hair in with my under cap so of course when she made me take off my hijab my hair fell out of the bun it was in. In no sense does it make sense for her to say she (CSM Montoya) could spot that my hair was out of regulation if my hijab was fully within regulation. When COL David J. Zinn signed my religious accommodation no where did he state that I would get randomly inspected, that I had to pin my hair a certain way in hijab, or that I couldn't pin my hair inside of my under cap. I feel I am a target even more and now that a lie was pushed on me sir I am more than willing and ready to

take the poly test to prove to those above me I am not lying if the incident that happen. I am a victim of religious rape, and that my religion from here on will not be respected.

This angers me to see how I am getting treated in all of this, saddens me, and makes me uncomfortable to even step back in the ranks for those in 704th BSB.

Background:
MRFF's Efforts on Behalf of
U.S. Military Members of the Muslim Faith

[Click to Read Background](#)

THE FORWARD
REFERENCES TELEVANGELIST
PAT ROBERTSON's
BELITTLING OF MIKEY WEINSTEIN

*"One little Jewish radical who is
scaring the pants off of you."*
—Pat Robertson



Click image and go to the 24 minute mark (51min 55 seconds)

The Forward: Debunking The Myth
That Anti-Zionism Is Anti-Semitic

By: Peter Beinart

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

(Excerpts from Forward/Emphasis added by MRFF)

It is a bewildering and alarming time to be a Jew, both because antisemitism is rising and because so many politicians are responding to it not by protecting Jews but by victimising Palestinians.

On 16 February, members of France's yellow vest protest movement hurled antisemitic insults at the distinguished French Jewish philosopher Alain Finkielkraut. On 19 February, swastikas were found on 80 gravestones in Alsace. Two days later, the French president, Emmanuel Macron, after announcing that Europe was "facing a resurgence of antisemitism unseen since World War II", unveiled new measures to fight it.

[...]

Israel's current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in 2005 said, "we have no greater friend in the whole world than Pat Robertson" – the same **Pat Robertson who later called former US air force judge Mikey Weinstein a "little Jewish radical"** for promoting religious freedom in the American military.

[...]

[Click to Read Full Article from Forward.com](#)

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"Thank you greatly sir"

From: Active Duty U.S. Army MRFF Muslim Client
Date: March 12, 2019 at 2:33:28 PM MDT
To: Mikey Weinstein
Subject: Thank you greatly sir

Mikey,

I want to take the time out to thank you ! (Alhamdulillah) as we would say. "Praise be to god" for all your help, hard work, and dedication to my situation. Being religiously raped from a strong belief of mine was horrific. Going through this while in the service sometimes we as soldier take those jabs because we fear what may happen if we speak up. In this situation I could not hold it in any longer. I was torn from my beliefs, the help of Military Religious Freedom Foundation has helped me on so many levels, mentally, physically, emotionally. I can walk and stand strong and high. *(senior military officials' name and rank withheld)*'s referral to your foundation is a great blessing and I greatly appreciate, you have not let me down, even on none working days you were here checking on me. In this discouraging time you helped keep faith. Sir from the bottom of my heart I thank you. I hope more service members use your foundation as an outlet and no longer take harsh punishment.

(name, rank, MOS, assigned military unit and military installation all withheld)

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**"The Earth Is Kept From Spinning Off Its Axis
By Unblinkered Madmen"**

FOUND BY A STAUNCH MRFF SUPPORTER ON
CATLIN JOHNSTONE ROGUE JOURNALIST
AND DEDICATED TO MIKEY/MRFF

From: *(name withheld)*
Date: March 9, 2019 at 11:12 PM
To: Mikey Weinstein
Subject: The Earth Is Kept From Spinning Off Its Axis By Unblinkered Madmen

Mikey, this is dedicated to you...

"You have got to be out of your mind.

You've got to be crazy enough to slap aside the hand that is offering you the Kool-Aid.

You've got to be mad enough to call it a spade when everyone else is calling it a sunflower.

You've got to be nutty enough to see a new world around the corner while everyone else says it's impossible.

You've got to be off your rocker and skanking to '90s ska punk while everyone else is quite certain they're hearing a calliope waltz.

The earth is kept from spinning off its axis by unblinkered madmen.

By lucid lunatics. By clear-eyed crazies.

The only thing keeping the world from plunging into total insanity are those

few who are insane enough to doubt its sanity.

Those few who cringe at the tinny bloviations of the Official News Man and strain to hear the whispers underneath the cacophony.

Those few who close their ears to the blaring screens and open their foreheads to the great big sky.

Those few who are loony enough to see dust and ashes on the faces of billboards and paradise between the gaps in the noise.

You've got to be absolutely moonstruck, to keep yelling at the Bastards when the world insists you pretend you don't see them.

To keep forging toward the light when everyone is screaming that it is darkness.

To keep building heaven on earth while the world hides your bricks and buries your tools.

Thank you, berserk bulwarks.

Thank you, savage saints.

For daring to hallucinate when the world says regurgitate.

For daring to howl when the world says march.

For daring to dream when the world says die.

You are the madmen who will lead us out of this mad house.

You are the homeless wanderers who will lead us home."

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

MRFF Information/Contact:
(505) 250-7727

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our Fight in the Courts and in the Media**

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