

Attorney Says Radical Muslim Hacked Pro-Family Group's Website

✖ A Florida attorney who represented runaway convert Rifqa Bary says his organization's website was destroyed by a radical Muslim hacker because of his involvement in the teen's case.

John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy Council in Orlando, said a hacker left obscene messages on the council's website Friday before disabling its back-end controls and erasing most of the data.

A message left in broken wording and signed by "Jhon Tairy" said the site was hacked because of the council's views about "Great Islam."

Stemberger said the site's content management system, data and coding were corrupted. Because there was no backup for the website, he said it will have to be rebuilt at a cost of \$20,000, half of which has been donated by a supporter.

Stemberger represented teen convert Rifqa Bary for several weeks last year before her case was moved from Florida to Columbus, Ohio, where her parents live.

Bary sought independence from her Muslim parents after running away to Florida in July 2009, claiming they threatened to kill her for converting to Christianity. Bary's parents deny those claims, and an investigation found no evidence to support the teen's accusations.

Bary, however, gained legal independence from her parents when she turned 18 last month. A native of Sri Lanka, she also has been granted permanent legal residence in the U.S.

In his support of Bary, Stemberger argued that the mosque the teen's parents attended near Columbus had ties to international terrorist groups and supported alleged "honor killings." He sent a memorandum to the court documenting his claims, which was posted online and widely inflamed Muslims.

Although Bary's case has largely been resolved, Stemberger said the hacker may have been motivated by recent media reports about a \$10 million defamation lawsuit filed against Stemberger last week.

In the suit, attorney Omar Tarazi, who represented Bary's parents in Ohio, claims Stemberger falsely accused him of being linked to the Columbus-area mosque that allegedly had ties to terrorists. He also said Stemberger damaged his reputation in interviews on Fox News.

Stemberger is also the focus of a Florida Bar investigation into possible ethics violations for statements he made about Bary's case.

Tarazi's suit also names blogger Pamela Oshry, who writes under the name Pamela Geller at the website Atlas Shrugged. Tarazi claims she falsely reported that he joined Hamas and was paid by groups with terrorist connections, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported.

Stemberger said he plans to report the hacking to the FBI. He believes the policy council was targeted because it was mentioned in recent reports about the lawsuit. The council is separate from Stemberger's personal-injury law firm and advocates for socially conservative political candidates and issues.

In 2008, it successfully lobbied for a gay marriage ban in Florida and supported a recent bill that would have required women seeking abortions to undergo an ultrasound and have the image explained to them. The measure passed in the Florida Legislature but was ultimately vetoed by Gov. Charlie Crist,

who is running for a U.S. Senate seat.