

Activists Proclaim the Name of Jesus Over Islamic Tolerance Rally

A rally at the Texas Capitol on Thursday by Muslims seeking religious tolerance was repeatedly disrupted by a small group of protesters who said the state belonged to followers of Jesus Christ and that Muslims should go back to the Middle East.

During opening remarks at the Texas Muslim Capitol Day event, a Christian activist from Michigan grabbed the microphone from the speaker and said: "I proclaim the name of the Lord Jesus Christ over the capitol of Texas. I stand against Islam."

A group of people who described themselves as Christian activists also heckled the group of about 600 who showed up for the rally. The protesters shouted as the Muslim group sang the national anthem and then tried to interrupt speakers calling for religious tolerance.

Some of the protesters shouted: "Go home. You ain't going to be happy here."

There are about half a million Muslims in Texas, according to some estimates, with many being in the state for several generations.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said no arrests were made at the event.

"As soon as I got to the lectern, that woman came and grabbed the microphone out of my hands. It made us feel a little unsafe," said Ruth Nasrullah, a spokeswoman for the Houston branch of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, which helped arrange the event.

Some U.S. Islamic groups have reported stepped-up harassment since deadly attacks by Islamist gunmen at the offices of the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket in Paris this month.

The Texas Legislature was not in session on Thursday, but one lawmaker, Republican state Representative Molly White, wrote on her Facebook page that she had instructed staff members how to manage any person who came into her office from the rally.

“Ask representatives from the Muslim community to renounce Islamic terrorist groups and publicly announce allegiance to America and our laws. We will see how long they stay in my office,” she wrote.

In neighboring Oklahoma, state Representative John Bennett, a Republican, spoke out in January against the Oklahoma chapter of a national Islamic organization, calling on leaders to condemn verses of the Quran.

In September and October, Bennett told media that Islam was a cancer that needed to be “cut out” of America.

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