

Is Sharia Tribunal in Texas an Islamic Trojan Horse?

Sharia is the law of the land in many Muslim dominated countries. Spreading Sharia around the world is also the stated goal of terror groups like ISIS, Boko Haram and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Now an Islamic tribunal has brought the practice to of all places, Texas.

"Sharia, it is exactly Islamic law, it is from God, it is from Allah," Dr. Taher El-Badawi, one of the four judges of the new tribunal, said. "It's full of mercy. I know you have a lot of bad experience and a lot of bad examples around us, I agree with you. But not just in Islam, it is everywhere."

No Conflict with US Law?

The Islamic Center of Irving, Texas, is one of the locations that the Islamic tribunal operates. The fact that Sharia law is being practiced in the United States at all comes as a shock to many Americans.

"Immediately my mind went to 'how can that be, we have a constitution in our country?'" one Texas resident said.

Dr. El-Badawi assures people that no decision will conflict with federal or state law. They will handle no criminal cases, only divorce or business disputes.

Yet, many Muslims see it as the ultimate authority.

"If just the Muslim woman wants to go to civil court, and she got the final decree from the civil court, that's not enough for her to be divorced, so she has to go to an imam or to come to Islamic tribunal to get the final divorce for both parties for both sides, the Sharia law, or Islamic law or religious

way and also the civil way," El-Badawi said.

Opponents of the Islamic tribunal say there is no place for Sharia law here in the United States. CBN News spoke with Dr. Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy, who says Muslims will be coerced to take their issues to the tribunal.

"If a woman for example wants her divorce to be recognized in the Islamic community, then she must get it through the sharia process," Gaffney explained.

Mediators for the Community

The judges from the Islamic tribunal say there are similar tribunals in any religion and they're just trying to act as mediators and counselors for the Islamic community.

"Many, many communities have the same thing. For Muslims, this is the first time, I agree with you, but this is not an attack or 'ignore anything in the United States,'" El-Badawi said.

Texas lawyer John Degroote said he sees parallels to mediations settled out of court.

"If it's non-binding and simply helps people guide their way through the dispute, all the better," Degroote said.

The Islamic tribunal stresses that it will not follow the harsh Islamic law practiced in Muslim countries. But Gaffney argues allowing any Sharia here will undermine U.S. laws and protections for Muslims, especially women and children.

He points out the track record of what's already happened in Europe.

"In places like Britain we've seen a separate court system take effect," he explained. "You now have something like 87 different Sharia courts recognized by the British government that operate kind of in parallel with the courts of the

English common law.”

“In our country we’ve both seen this kind of effort made, mostly through arbitration councils to this point, now this tribunal, but also an effort made to penetrate our actual own American court system and this is very troubling,” Gaffney added.

In Mississippi, lawmakers are working on legislations that would prevent Sharia law from being argued in their courtrooms. Another two dozen states have also considered measures to curb it.