

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION of NORTH AMERICA

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Imam Elturk Joins Multifaith Clergy Coalition Calling for End to ICE Presence in Michigan



Imam Mustapha Elturk, the president of the Islamic Organization of America and co-chair of the Imams Council of Michigan, called for the closure of all ICE detention centers in Michigan and an end to any new detention facilities. March 24, 2026. | Photo by Katherine Dailey/Michigan Advance.

[Warren, MI] – Imam Steve Mustapha Elturk, President of the Islamic Organization of North America (IONA) and Co-Chair of the Imams Council of Michigan, joined a broad coalition of multifaith clergy leaders on March 24, 2026, in a press conference, on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol, calling for an end to the presence and expansion of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations in Michigan.

Faith leaders from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other traditions gathered to draw what Imam Elturk described as “a line in the sand,” urging lawmakers and government officials to protect immigrant communities and uphold human dignity.

During the press conference, Imam Elturk spoke passionately about the moral responsibility to stand with vulnerable communities, reflecting on his own journey as an immigrant and expressing deep concern about the current climate.

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Imam Elturk, who immigrated to the United States in 1976, reflected on his personal experience and the current climate facing immigrants today.

“Is this the America I came to know? No, it’s not,” he said. “We were welcomed—it was a wonderful country. Today, we are witnessing a time where the dignity of human beings is being stripped away.” Imam Elturk stated.

The coalition called for concrete measures, including limiting ICE enforcement, the closure of ICE’s detention centers, protecting places of worship, schools, and hospitals as safe spaces, and ensuring that immigrant families are not subjected to fear, separation, and injustice.

Imam Elturk emphasized that defending the rights of immigrants is not only a civic duty but a religious obligation shared across faith traditions.

“Faith compels us to stand for justice, to defend the oppressed, and to uphold the dignity of every human being regardless of their status,” he said. “We will stand in solidarity with all those at risk, even at great personal cost.”

Faith leaders also underscored that their advocacy is rooted in deeply held religious principles. “Our law must reflect our values,” said one speaker, noting that faith traditions call for justice, compassion, and the protection of human dignity.

The press conference highlighted both the urgency of the issue and the growing interfaith movement across Michigan committed to defending immigrant rights. Organizers emphasized that this gathering marks the beginning of continued advocacy and encouraged community members of all backgrounds to remain engaged.

The gathering reflects a growing movement among faith leaders in Michigan who are increasingly speaking out against policies they believe undermine fundamental human rights and moral values.

IONA reaffirms its commitment to interfaith collaboration, justice, and the protection of all communities, especially the most vulnerable.

END

Imam Elturk’s Full Statement:

Close all Detention Centers and Stop the Sonstruction of New Ones

For years, the network of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers has operated as a system of cruelty hidden behind chain-link fences and razor wire. Today, we draw a line in the sand: we must close these facilities permanently and reject the construction of any new ones. This is not merely a matter of policy preference; it is a constitutional and moral imperative.

We, the Michigan Religious Leaders, demand the immediate closure of ICE detention centers and a halt to the acquisition or expansion of any such facilities.

This demand is grounded in serious and ongoing concerns: inhumane conditions, inadequate medical care, reports of abuse, the prolonged detention of asylum seekers, the separation of families, and enforcement practices that include entering homes without judicial warrants.

We are witnessing a systematic erosion of due process, where individuals, many of whom are seeking nothing more than safety or a better life, are held indefinitely without adequate access to legal counsel.

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The treatment of individuals in immigration detention facilities, including the excessive and punitive use of solitary confinement as a routine management tool, medical negligence resulting in preventable deaths, to the allegations of sexual abuse, is not only contrary to ICE's own stated policies and standards, but also stands in violation of U.S. constitutional law and international human rights principles. The Fifth Amendment guarantees that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, protections that extend to all persons within the United States, regardless of immigration status.

Furthermore, these facilities have become hotbeds for racial profiling. The targeting of individuals for detention is often based on ethnicity or national origin rather than any legitimate public safety concern. This practice erodes trust between law enforcement and the very communities they are sworn to protect.

Recent testimony has further deepened these concerns. Mr. Ryan Schwank, a former Assistant Chief Counsel who served with ICE for over four years, publicly resigned and described the system as "deficient, defective, and broken." He further alleged that he was instructed to teach new cadets in ways that would violate the constitution. These claims, if true, demand immediate investigation, accountability, and systemic reform.

In light of these realities, we believe that the current detention system is fundamentally flawed **and must be dismantled**. Immigration enforcement must not come at the cost of constitutional integrity or human dignity.

We call instead for humane and effective alternatives, including community-based supervision programs, case management support, access to legal representation, and timely, fair immigration proceedings. Such approaches uphold accountability while preserving the dignity and rights of all individuals.

We, the Michigan Religious Leaders, demand the immediate closure of ICE detention centers and a halt to the acquisition or expansion of any such facilities.

We, the Michigan Religious Leaders, stand in solidarity with those who face prejudice and injustice. We will meet resistance with resilience and continue to call upon our elected officials to end these harmful practices and pursue policies rooted in justice, compassion, and the rule of law.

A Moral Call to People of Conscience

Social justice is not the responsibility of one faith or one people alone, it is a shared moral duty. The Qur'an reminds us:

"O you who believe, stand firmly for justice as witnesses to God, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your relatives..." [Quran, 4:135]

And it further calls upon us to "cooperate in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and enmity" [Quran, 5:2].

These are not merely words, but a divine mandate—to uphold justice, defend the oppressed, and stand together in the face of wrongdoing.

We call upon all people of faith and conscience to rise to this responsibility. The fight must go on.

Imam Steve Mustapha Elturk