



Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave
Montgomery, AL 36104
splcactionfund.org

November 21, 2023

The Honorable Mark E. Green
Chair
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Green and Ranking Member Thompson:

On behalf of the SPLC Action Fund, we write to correct a false statement made by Representative Greene about the Southern Poverty Law Center during last week's hearing on "Worldwide Threats to the Homeland," and to provide context for an exchange with FBI Director Wray that perpetuates earlier mischaracterizations of our work. We would ask that this letter be included as part of the formal record for the November 15 hearing.

Established in 1971, the SPLC has been tireless in identifying and rooting out hate and extremist groups to create a fair, inclusive, and unified nation. Related, the SPLC Action Fund advocates for the implementation of policies and laws to eliminate structural racism and inequalities, alongside impacted communities in pursuit of equity and opportunity for all. We work primarily in the Southeast United States where we have offices in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C.

During her questioning of Director Wray, Representative Greene asserted:

Mr. Wray, that this one right here, this person involved in the Global Intifada group that illegally – they broke the law, came in and occupied the Cannon Office House Building, interrupted Congress, interrupted hearings. Right here, Katrina Bleckley is the lead attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

This statement by Representative Greene includes information that is demonstrably false. Katrina Bleckley does not work for the Southern Poverty Law Center and has not worked for our organization since 2022.

In addition, during her question time, Rep. Greene asked Director Wray:

GREENE: Do you still use the Southern Poverty Law Center as a source? You use them? The FBI use the Southern Poverty Law Center as a source when targeting Catholics? Are you still using the Southern Poverty Law Center as a source?



WRAY: Congresswoman, I think you're referring to is the so-called Richmond Intelligence Product, which we, as soon as I learned about it, I was horrified, withdrew it, we had an inspection done. And part of the problem that we found with that particular product, that particular office is precisely what you're talking about the reliance on the Southern Poverty Law Center and the way in which they relied on.

Again, correcting the record, the SPLC did not provide any information or communicate in any way with any FBI personnel involved in preparing this Richmond Field Office memo. The SPLC does identify breakoff Radical Traditionalist Catholic groups as hate groups – because they are deeply antisemitic and subscribe to an ideological view rejected by the Vatican and 70 million mainstream Catholics in the United States. The SPLC defines a hate group as an organization or collection of individuals that – based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities – has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics. An organization does not need to have engaged in criminal conduct or have followed their speech with actual unlawful action to be designated a hate group.

Moreover, we are concerned that Director Wray's response to Representative Green's question about our work may be subject to misinterpretation, suggesting that the memo's analysis was provided by or made in collaboration with the SPLC. It was not. We have confirmed that neither the former SPLC Intelligence Project Director nor any current SPLC or Intelligence Project staff member had any communication with FBI personnel about the content of this memo. Moreover, we do not view the threat of this small movement in the manner described in the highly redacted FBI document. The SPLC background on Radical Traditional Catholicism is readily available on our website: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/radical-traditional-catholicism>.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide clarity and to correct the record on these two issues. If you have questions about this matter, or need more information, please contact Michael Lieberman, Senior Policy Counsel, Hate and Extremism michael.lieberman@splcenter.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sakira Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sakira Cook
Director, Federal Policy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Corke". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Susan Corke
Director, Intelligence Project