

News**Family of Muslim Teen Arrested for Homemade Clock Files Suit**By **EMILY SCHMALL**
Associated Press

DALLAS — The family of a Muslim boy who was arrested after bringing a homemade clock to school filed a federal lawsuit Monday against Texas school officials and others, saying the incident violated the 14-year-old boy's civil rights, prompted death threats and forced them to leave the United States.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Ahmed Mohamed, who was arrested at his suburban Dallas high school in September and charged with having a hoax bomb. He says he brought the homemade digital clock to school to show his English teacher.

Ahmed showed off the clock, made out of a plastic pencil box and electrical wire and other hardware salvaged from his parents' garage, on Monday during a news conference with his parents and attorneys.

Irving police later dropped the charge, but he was still suspended for

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three days. He never returned to the school; his family opted to have him take classes elsewhere.

The lawsuit names Irving Independent School District, the city of Irving and the school's principal, and asks a jury to determine the damages. In November, the family asked the district and city to pay \$15 million or else face a suit. District spokeswoman Lesley Weaver said in a statement Monday that attorneys for the district will review the suit and determine a course of action.

“Irving ISD continues to deny violating the student's rights and will respond to claims in accordance with

court rules,” she said, adding that school officials for now will have no further comment.

The Mohamed family questioned whether the boy was mistreated due to his religion but the district has denied the claim.

The family has since moved to Qatar, citing threats and a scholarship offered to Ahmed in the Persian Gulf country. Ahmed moved back to the U.S. last month for the summer to visit family and friends, and will do some traveling around the country, but will return to Qatar next month to start 10th grade at Qatar Academy, a private school in Doha.

“For the safety of my family, I have to go back to Qatar, because right now it's not very safe for my family or for anyone who's a minority,” Ahmed said during Monday's news conference.

While in Texas, Ahmed said, he has to wear a hat, sunglasses and a hoodie. “I can't walk out of the house without being covered up because I might get shot

because that happens here,” he said.

The teen's parents, Mohamed Elhasan Mohamed and Muna Ibrahim, have not found work yet in Qatar, so the family of eight is living in government housing and on food vouchers.

Among the claims made in the suit, which was brought by the teen's father, is that the boy's right to equal protection under the law was violated and that officers arrested him without probable cause.

Ahmed was a victim of systemic discrimination by the school district and state Board of Education that has marginalized Muslims and other minority groups, the suit claims.



AP PHOTO/LM OTIERO

Ahmed Mohamed shows the clock he built in a school pencil box to reporters after a news conference in Dallas, Monday, Aug. 8, 2016. The family of Ahmed Mohamed, who was arrested after bringing the homemade clock to school, and charged with having a hoax bomb, filed a federal lawsuit Monday against Texas school officials and others, saying they violated the 14-year-old boy's civil rights.

“History tells us that when we have stood tall and proud for equality and freedom, we have grown as a nation,” the suit says. “When we have given in to fear and hate, we flounder.”

The suit adds, “In the case of Ahmed Mohamed, we have the opportunity to take a stand for equality and for justice, two things that should prevail above all else.”

The Irving school district is also under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice over an alleged pattern

of discrimination against minority students.

The district in February sued the Texas Attorney General to keep the justice department's investigation private.

Ahmed's story brought an outpouring of support from President Barack Obama, other political leaders, corporate executives and NASA scientists.

“When I went to the new school, they asked me, ‘are you that clock kid?’ I told them yeah, I was. My identity was stripped,” Ahmed said.

Former Somali Refugee on Brink of Minnesota Statehouse

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Ilhan Omar spent four years in a Kenyan refugee camp as a young girl, fleeing with her family from civil war in Somalia. Two decades later, after forging a new life in Minnesota, she appears on the brink of becoming the nation's first Somali-American state legislator.

Omar, a 33-year-old community activist, cried as she delivered victory speeches in English and Somali after defeating a 44-year incumbent in the latest sign of the Somali community's growing influence in the city and state. Her victory in a heavily Democratic Minneapolis district makes her a strong favorite in the general election.

“Tonight we made history,” Omar told supporters after her win late Tuesday. “Tonight marks the beginning of the future of our district, a new era of representation.”

A seat in the Legislature would be a new high-water mark for Minnesota Somalis, who in recent years have won seats on the Minneapolis school board and City Council. First drawn in the early 1990s by welcoming social programs, they're now estimated by the census to number around 40,000, though community advocates say the figure is much higher.

In an interview Wednesday, Omar said her campaign set out to build a broad-based coalition of not only East Africans, but longtime residents and students in a district that encompasses the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus and Augsburg College. She said she hopes her victory sends a message to young women of color who are thinking about running for office that they can raise money, shatter stereotypes and win big.

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