



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 17, 2019

Judge Tosses Center for Immigration Studies' Lawsuit Against SPLC

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has thrown out a case brought by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) against the left-wing smear group the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). CIS had alleged that the SPLC violated the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act when it referred to the CIS as a "hate group" under the auspices of their [infamous "Hatewatch"](#) list.



CIS alleges that the SPLC is attempting to financially destroy the organization by labeling it a "hate group."

[Judge Amy Berman Jackson found](#) that the CIS "failed to allege the predicate offense and a pattern of racketeering necessary for a RICO claim. Thus, plaintiff's lawsuit fails and the Court need not address defendants' other arguments."

CIS's suit specifically named Heidi Beirich, the director of the SPLC's ironically named Intelligence Project and former SPLC president Richard Cohen, who [resigned in March amid accusations of scandal](#) within the organization, in its suit.

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"The upshot of the complaint is that defendants advanced a conclusion that was debatable, and that this expression of a flawed opinion harmed plaintiff's reputation," Jackson wrote. The judge determined that CIS was attempting to "shoehorn" the RICO statute into what she considered a defamation claim.

The SPLC asked the judge to impose sanctions against CIS for what it called "frivolous" claims and an attempt to "censor constitutionally protected speech." But the judge refused to impose sanctions saying that CIS's suit was not "completely frivolous."

Mark Krikorian, the executive director for CIS, has said that the group has not yet decided upon an appeal. Previously, Krikorian has claimed that his group does not meet the SPLC's own definition of a hate group but persisted in naming them one anyway.

"SPLC and its leaders have every right to oppose our work on immigration, but they do not have the right to label us a hate group and suggest we are racists," Krikorian said. "The Center for Immigration Studies is fighting back against the SPLC smear campaign and its attempt to stifle debate through intimidation and name calling."

On its website, SPLC refers to the CIS as "the go-to think tank for anti-immigrant politicians." It also claims that CIS "has a decades long history of circulating racist writers, while also associating with white nationalists." CIS was added to SPLC's "Hatewatch" list in 2016.

SPLC's interim president Karen Baynes-Dunning stood by its claim that CIS is an "anti-immigrant hate group."



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“As groups like CIS continue to infect the mainstream with their hateful anti-immigrant rhetoric, we will continue to call out their hate and bigotry whenever we see it,” Baynes-Dunning said in a statement.

It’s one small victory in what has been an extremely trying year for the SPLC. In March, the organization was forced to [fire](#) one of its founders, Morris Dees, over unspecified accusations of sexual misconduct. In the weeks that followed, both Cohen and legal director Rhonda Brownstein resigned under suspicious circumstances that have never been fully explained.

Former Michelle Obama chief of staff Tina Tchen, a Chicago-based attorney who was also [involved in the light sentencing of race crime hoaxer Jussie Smollet](#), was assigned to head an audit of the organization’s internal climate and workplace practices.

In addition, former SPLC staffer Bob Moser [wrote a piece in the New Yorker](#) in which he referred to the SPLC as a “highly profitable scam.” Moser’s piece painted a picture of a so-called social justice organization much more interested in profit than social justice.

Following Moser’s piece, tech giant Twitter stopped taking the SPLC’s advice on what could be considered “hate speech,” and divorced itself from the smear group. Thus far, other big tech companies have yet to follow Twitter’s lead, and Facebook, Google, and Amazon still partner with the SPLC, while insisting they have their own standards of what they consider “hate speech.”

Back in June of 2018, the SPLC was ordered to pay Maajid Nawaz, one of the founders of the [Quillam organization](#), which fights against Muslim extremism, [\\$3.3 million dollars](#) for its incorrect assertion that he was “anti-Muslim.” Since then, dozens of groups have sued the SPLC over their inclusion on SPLC’s Hatewatch list.

So, while the SPLC may have skated on the lawsuit brought by CIS, their problems are far from over. The SPLC has proven over and over again that it is anti-Christian, anti-conservative, and anti-constitutional. Hopefully, its day of reckoning is still on the horizon.

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