



TIMESOC

Islamic Society of Orange County under heightened security after online threats



The mosque at the Islamic Society of Orange County, which has been subjected to online threats over its expansion plan. (James Carbone)



By Gabriel San Román
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The Islamic Society of Orange County is taking tighter security measures following a recent online campaign that targeted the longtime pillar of the community in Garden

Grove.

With threats brazenly made against the mosque and community center on social media, the Garden Grove Police Department has stepped up patrols around the hub that serves 10,000 people in the greater area.

“We are also a school campus with children,” said Hassan Mukhlis, ISOC’s president. “We appreciate that there was a swift response to the threats from our elected officials and police department. We are continuing to work with them.”

ISOC officials are calling on law enforcement to investigate threats posted on Facebook earlier this month.

A spokesperson for Garden Grove PD did not comment for this story.



TIMESOC

Buena Park pastor removed as police chaplain over anti-Muslim social media posts

March 3, 2026

Long considered the “mother mosque” for Southern California Muslims, threats against ISOC followed an online screed by Amy “Mek” Mekelburg, founder and editor-in-chief of Rise Align Ignite Reclaim.

In a post on X that was republished Tuesday on the group’s website, Mekelburg claimed ISOC’s plans to expand its compound will create a “Sharia enclave” and serve as a cover for the “Islamization” of Orange County.

“This is how parallel societies form,” she wrote, “not overnight, but acre by acre, bylaw by bylaw, school by school. California already struggles with integration in some communities. Handing more control to a Shariah-first model accelerates the problem.”

Reposted on Facebook by another verified user, RAIR’s framing sparked comments that ranged from hate rhetoric to violent threats.

“It would be a shame if somebody blew it up with an I.E.D.!” one person sarcastically wrote.

“These people, they need to leave America either upright or not,” another commented about Muslims.



Garden Grove police have stepped up patrols around the Islamic Society of Orange County. (James Carbone/James Carbone)

In a search summary, Facebook’s Meta AI assistant referred to RAIR as its top source on ISOC and presented the “separate society” expansion plan fears as legitimate criticism.

But the Council on American-Islamic Relations' [Islamophobia tracker](#) flagged the Mekelburg's RAIR Foundation USA as an anti-Muslim hate organization and website.

"It's a hate group through-and-through," said Amir Shabaik, CAIR-LA's legal director. "That comes clear through their misinformation campaign, as well. There's obviously a clear, hateful agenda being pushed here."

CAIR-LA condemned RAIR's online posts as a "smear campaign" and is helping ISOC take measure to address security concerns.

In the meantime, two local congressional representatives have also denounced the violent rhetoric.

"I am disgusted by the online attacks and threats of violence targeting ISOC," said Rep. Derek Tran, a Democrat whose 45th Congressional District includes Garden Grove. "Our law enforcement officials must investigate and prosecute these threats to the fullest extent of the law. Islamophobia has no place in America."

Rep. Dave Min (D-Irvine) called ISOC "a vital part" of the county's fabric for over 50 years and demanded accountability.



TIMESOC

Little Arabia's new mural paints a postcard greeting for the ethnic enclave

April 10, 2026

Established in 1976, ISOC has grown to host interfaith events, farmers markets and a food pantry that became a vital resource for the community when the federal government shutdown last year impacted food stamp benefits.

Hoping to clarify its future plans, Mukhlis looks forward to ISOC's next 50 years and an expanded compound that offers integrated services for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

ISOC officials are working with city planners on permits for construction. They hope the “reimagined” plan for the mosque and community center will break ground next year.

A gymnasium with basketball courts and an expanded café are key components of the proposed revamp of ISOC’s 5-acre property.

“These are just our goals to expand our services, work with the city [and] work with the residents,” he said. “It’s not just for Muslims, it’s for everybody. To say anything different is an unfair characterization, given that we are a front line for our fellow Garden Grove residents whenever there’s a need.”



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Gabriel San Román is a feature writer for TimesOC. He previously worked at OC Weekly until the newspaper’s closing in late 2019. In 2023, San Román was part of the breaking news reporting team that was a Pulitzer finalist for its coverage of the Lunar New Year mass shooting in Monterey Park.