

- **EEOC v. Plaza Operating Partners Ltd. dba The Plaza Hotel, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Inc., et al.**

No. 03 CV 7680 (LTS) (S.D.N.Y. June 8, 2005)

The New York District Office alleged in this Title VII suit that defendants subjected employees at The Plaza, a luxury hotel located in Manhattan, to a hostile work environment based on religion (Muslim) and/or national origin (Arab or South Asian). After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, managers at The Plaza, began calling claimants names such as "Osama," "Al Qaeda," and "Taliban" several times a day and also gave them keys in holders labeled "bin Laden," etc., in place of their names. Coworkers directed similar comments at the claimants. Although defendants had promulgated an employee handbook containing an antidiscrimination policy, most of the claimants had not received the handbook and were not aware of the policy. Defendants ignored some of complaints about the harassment and failed to adequately investigate others.

Under the 3-year consent decree resolving this case, defendant Plaza Operating Partners will provide \$525,000 to 12 claimants. Defendants will not discriminate against employees because of national origin or religion or retaliate against employees for asserting rights under federal employment discrimination laws. The bulk of the decree applies to the 14 Fairmont Hotels nationwide that defendant Fairmont Hotels and Resorts and its affiliates (collectively "Fairmont") manage, as well as to The Plaza Hotel (currently under renovation) if it reopens and Fairmont, which managed The Plaza at the time of the discrimination, manages it again. These provisions include the following: Fairmont will implement an antidiscrimination/antiharassment policy at its hotels. Fairmont will provide training on the policy to all managers and supervisors (8 hours), to all nonmanagerial employees (4 hours), and to all HR staff responsible for conducting harassment and discrimination training (3 days). Fairmont will also post a summary of the policy on employee bulletin boards at each hotel, distribute the summary to all employees, and translate the summary into languages other than English upon request. Fairmont will provide new employees with a 30-minute oral presentation on the policy as well as a copy of it during initial orientation.